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THE

CHRISTIAN'S

ARMOUR AGAINST INFIDELITY:

BEING A

COLLECTION OF RARE AND VALUABLE TRACTS

UPON THE

EVIDENCES OF DIVINE REVELATION,

BY

DISTINGUISHED WRITERS.

WITH A

PRELIMINARY ESSAY

ON

THE CHARACTER AND PRETENSIONS OF MODERN INFIDELITY,

TOGETHER WITH

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY THE

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PREFATORY ESSAY ON MODERN INFIDELITY.

When one considers what is the nature of true Christianity, and what are the benefits which it has conferred upon the world, even in its enfeebled and corrupted forms; how it has raised the female sex—one half the species—from the lowest social degradation; how it has abolished or mitigated slavery—humanized war—strengthened the intellect of man—promoted literature and freedom—purified morals; how, from being the religion of a poor despised Jew, it has moved onward till it has become the religion of the most enlightened, powerful, free, and civilized nations of the earth, distinguished in science and art; when it is remembered what systems of darkness and superstition and cruelty and blood it has successfully encountered and overthrown in its progress; what hopes it has awakened respecting the future; how many death-beds it has irradiated and gladdened;—one would imagine Christianity would be universally hailed as the Benefactor of mankind, and that men would as soon think of attempting to blot out the sun from the firmament as desire to deny its claims or check its advancement. What better system of belief and practice can be substituted in its room? But, strange to say, in almost all ages, there have been not a few who have denied its Divine authority, and proved its bitter enemies, treating it as if it were the foe of human happiness; and, what increases the surprise, men of superior intellect and attainments have not unfrequently been the most prominent in this unhappy class.

At the present day, infidelity has descended from a limited number in the higher or more intelligent circles of society, to a large class of the uninstructed and the poor. In Popish countries, the absurd and indefensible aspects under which Christianity has been presented; and in Protestant countries, the coldness and indifference, the divisions and the errors and ungodliness, of too many professed Christians, together with the want of adequate means of religious instruction, whether for old or young, have all powerfully contributed to this melancholy result. Perhaps in our own country, the principles of infidelity were never more widely spread among all, and especially the humbler, classes of society, than at the present day. In all departments—in literature and science—in views of education and civil government and national happiness—we meet with the principles of unbelief, often unknown to those who hold and propagate them; while in prints and regular publications, and public meetings and lectures, we find abundant evidence that many of the poor and hard-wrought, who, of all men, need the consolations and hopes of true religion most, have abandoned themselves to infidel teaching, and are bringing up their children according to the same miserable model. It is bad enough that such infidel principles are in high repute and acceptance, as that—in religion there is no finding out the truth; and that man is not responsible for his belief; and that he may attain to perfectibility in a present life, by the mere force of knowledge and political institutions;—but it is still worse, when horrible prints are circulated, caricaturing the Jehovah of the Scriptures; when the *Age of Reason* is drawn forth from its obscurity, publicly proclaimed, and set above the Bible; and when men are not ashamed to publish themselves as the Enemies of God and to advocate Atheism. And yet all who are acquainted with the state of the larger manufacturing towns, must be aware, that such things exist and prevail among a certain class of their people.

Nor is a denial of Revelation, leading onward to the denial of a God, to be met with only in this country; traces of the same spirit appear in various parts of the world. Even in the United States of America, which are Protestant like ourselves, Atheists hold meetings for the public worship of nature,* and have regular organized congregations in various quarters; three in the city of New York. The Rev. Dr Beecher, one of the most eminent ministers of the Presbyterian Church, said, in the course of a speech before its General Asembly, two years ago—

"It used to be alleged that there were no Atheists among us. It is too late now to sing that song in our ears. They are now in the midst of us, and on every side. They swarm like the frogs of Egypt. They go up upon our tables, and into our chambers, to pollute and destroy. And they are different from the Atheists of former days. Formerly they were men of speculation—insulated men—here and there indulging their theory, like David Hume, in his study. But now they are open, active, organized—laborious—proselytizing. Instead of looking into the airy regions of mere fanciful speculation and theory, their maxim seems to be, like that of Cromwell to his soldiers, "Fire low." They aim at the mass of mankind. They prepare contamination and death for our working men. They scatter the materials of political combustion among those who are our strength—the bone and sinew of our nation—where a touch will blow us into atoms. The prevalence of corruption in our cities, however lamentable, would be comparatively a trifle, so long as our farmers and the yeomanry of the land kept steady.

* See Church of Scotland Magazine, *Atheism in America*, vol. iii. p. 69

Your theorists and abstract speculators may float like balloons on the moral atmosphere, and we may gaze upon them as objects rather of curiosity than alarm; but corrupt the people, and all is lost. This is what they are now attempting to do, by the printing and circulating of tracts, by the publication of newspapers, and by a combined application of ingenuity and industry worthy of a better cause."

As the fruit of this state of things, he records the melancholy facts, that there is a practical denial of accountability, and a growing spread of licentiousness, and a disposition to look upon all law as a tyrant. It is recorded, that at the period of the French Revolution, 14,000 copies of Paine's deistical works were sent over to the United States. We are grieved to learn, that the infidels of America, in their turn, have of late years been sending large supplies of the same works to India, and that Paine is read on the banks of the Ganges by young men whose minds are only opening to consider the claims of Christianity. We need say nothing of the continent of Europe. In popish France, in the course of twelve years, ending 1829, nearly six million copies of the writings of four of the most eminent French infidels were sold and circulated. Less than 100,000 copies of the Scriptures —many of them given gratuitously—were disseminated in the same time. In popish Spain, no literature is more current than French infidel literature. Volney and Voltaire are wide spread.

This prevalence of infidelity, both at home and abroad, is most affecting, and the guilt of those who listen to its temptations is serious and aggravated indeed. But it is well to remember that it does not come by chance, nor is it any matter of real surprise to the friends of Revelation. If the Bible speak true, this world is fallen and apostate; and if so, then it is not to be expected that the holy principles or the imperative claims of Christianity can be relished. Scripture expressly prophesies that a class of men will oppose and reject its authority even to the end. Did they not appear in the persons and character of infidels, the Scriptures would not be true; the evidence of prophecy would here be invalidated. Not a few eminent writers, such as Sir Isaac Newton, Lavater, Dr Hartley, &c., have been impressed, from the study of prophecy, with the conviction, that previous to the millennial triumphs of Christianity, there is to be a wide diffusion, if not a reign, of infidelity over Christendom. If this idea be well-founded, we may lay our account with the temporary ascendency of infidelity; but it is only to make the glory of the Gospel, in rising superior to all its enemies, the more conspicuous. In addition to these things, we have to consider, that in the Providence of God, important ends are answered by the permission of infidelity: that the opposition of unbelievers has, in every age, been overruled for good, for guarding the truths and evidences of Revelation, by provoking care and discussion. There is nothing, then, strange or wonderful in the existence or progress of infidelity. This is what the friends of Christianity might have anticipated. But while Christians are not taken by surprise, and while the whole success of infidelity is known before hand, and is at least limited and temporary, preparatory to the more glorious triumph of the Gospel, still it is the duty of Christians to use earnest and persevering means for exposing its fallacies and counteracting its influence. Very ample is the provision which has been made for this purpose.

The works on the Evidences of Revelation are immensely numerous and exceedingly varied. Men of all bodies professing Christianity—in all countries and ages —of all stations and professions—the layman as well as the minister of religion—have put forth books in defence of the Divine authority of the Scriptures. When the Christian church was too cold and dead to publish almost any thing else, she published on the Evidences. Of course the success of the writers has varied with their own qualifications, and the favourable or unfavourable position in which they stood for defending Christianity. One position is much more advantageous than another: the ground of a Protestant is far stronger than that of a Roman Catholic—that of an Evangelical Christian than that of a Socinian. Still there can be little doubt that good has been wrought by all in their respective spheres. In this country, I allude more particularly to Scotland, not a few important works have been published, from time to time, in defence of Divine Revelation. I cannot enumerate them all, but record those which at present occur—there may be some unknown to me. Many of the discourses which, throughout a century, have been preached before the *Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge*, and afterwards published, have been directed to the Christian Evidences. Professor Haliburton, of St Andrew's, wrote *On the Insufficiency of Reason;* Dr Beattie, of Aberdeen, *On the Evidences;* Dr Campbell, of Aberdeen, *Essay on Miracles;* Dr M'Knight, of Edinburgh, *Gospel Harmony;* Dr Findlay, of Glasgow, *Vindication of the Old Testament*, against Voltaire; Dr Gerard, of Aberdeen, *Dissertations on the Genius and Evidences of Christianity;* Sir H. Moncrieff, an early volume of *Discourses;* Dr Hill, of St Andrew's, *Lectures on Divinity*, vol. i.; Dr George Cook, *On the Resurrection of Christianity;* Dr John Cook, *On the Books of the New Testament;* Dr Brewster, *Testimonies of Distinguished Laymen to Revelation*; Dr Keith, *On the Evidence of Prophecy*, and *Demonstration*, &c.; Dr Chalmers, *On the Evidences*, besides two volumes additional in the new edition of his works; Dr Ranken, *Institutes of Theology;* Rev. Mr Wilson, of Irvine, *On the Reasonableness of Christianity;* Dr Wilson, one of the General Assembly's Missionaries at Bombay, a *Comparison of Heathenism and Christianity*, in various works; Dr Dewar, of Aberdeen, a recent *Text-Book on the Evidences*. Among laymen, the works of Lord Dalrymple Hailes, *Inquiry*, in answer to Gibbon; Robert Haldane, Esq., *On the Evidences of Revelation;* R. Ainslie, Esq., *Father's Gift to his Children;* Thomas Erskine, Esq., *On the Internal Evidence*—may be men-

tioned, besides many others. These different authors have all written ably and well in the department of the Evidences. Of late various smaller works have appeared; and, among others, a Course of *Lectures* by the Ministers of Glasgow, last winter. Much, however, as has been written and published, a good deal remains to be done in the way of application. Though there are new illustrations of the argument, with the progress of particular sciences, such as Astronomy and Geology, still, it is believed, considerable and important use may be made of old materials—materials which retain all their force, and which are fresh to many. In this publication, it is proposed to collect together, and reprint, at a cheap rate, a series of valuable Tracts on the subject, for the most part inaccessible to the general reader. So far as I am aware, they have never been collected, at least in this form, before. A few notes and illustrations are added, which, by bringing down the argument to the present day, and giving some account of the writers, and of the circumstances in which their works were written, it is hoped, may not prove uninteresting or uninstructive. All the Tracts are very able; more than one of them celebrated. The argument in each is conclusive; the combined force of the whole must, with every candid mind, be satisfactory indeed.

Before introducing the reader to these Tracts, in their appropriate order, it may not be amiss shortly to estimate the pretensions of infidelity, as a whole, at the present day. It puts itself forward in various important aspects and characters. Formerly, it was contented to be associated with the quiet speculations of literary or scientific men. Religion was thought a good thing for the body of the people; necessary at once for their restraint and comfort. Infidelity made no claims to general or exclusive usefulness; but now the case is altered, and unbelievers stand forward, contending that religion is the great evil in society, and that they are the great friends of *knowledge*, of *freedom*, and of *social happiness!* It is these pretensions which it is desirable for a moment to consider.

I. According to infidels, Christianity is the enemy of KNOWLEDGE: they are its devoted advocates. That some men professing Christianity, that a whole apostate church, are opposed to knowledge, may be true; but this does not affect the honour of true Christianity. She is not responsible for the errors and sins of mere nominal adherents. In her own nature, and according to her genuine operation upon her real disciples, she is the grand Friend and Advocate of knowledge; not every new and empirical notion, which may be dignified with the name, but of the great and established acquisitions of true knowledge. She has nothing to fear from science; she has much to hope from it. Not only has there ever been a crowd of the most learned men who have made a fair profession of Christianity, thus showing that there is no inconsistency between the two; but there is every reason to believe, that, apart from true religion, the great body of a people will never be educated. While education promotes religion, true religion is the direct promoter of education. It is when men are impressed with the conviction, that the Bible is the word of God, and contains the knowledge of the only way to eternal life, and that, as a matter of duty, it must be daily read; it is when parents are impressed with these things, that they will generally exert themselves, and make sacrifices that their children may be able to peruse the Scriptures; and when this is gained, and habits of reading formed, they will naturally turn to other departments of knowledge also. The grand impulse, however, towards a universal education, is a sense of the value and imperative claims of the Bible, as a revelation from heaven. We may safely say, that nothing but this, or some very peculiar national institutions, will persuade men to submit to the drudgery of teaching themselves or teaching others. These views are borne out by facts. What have been the countries of most education and knowledge? Where have the people been most universally instructed? They are those countries where Christianity has been most prevalent, and where the educational institutions have arisen out of the Christian church. Witness Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, New England. What party, at the present day, has done, or is doing most for popular education? Who are making the greatest sacrifices of trouble and money, rearing the greatest number of schools, &c.? The answer must be, It is the religious party, under the influence of Christianity. Infidelity boasts of its love of knowledge and education; but what has it accomplished on this field? What sacrifices has it made? What schools has it reared? What comparison could it bear with the educational services of our Scottish forefathers, of pious memory? The unbelievers of France may have expended large sums of money, in their contest with Christianity, and in the diffusion of their infidelity; but what have they actually expended for the benefit of the great body of the people—to educate their families, and make them useful in society? If their claim to being the grand friends of knowledge be well founded, they should be able easily to refer to cases of illustrious service. I need scarcely say, there are no such cases; and that while infidelity so miserably fails as a substantial supporter of knowledge and education, it is that very Christianity, which she denounces as the patron of ignorance, which is the active, and unwearied, and self-sacrificing promoter of the cause of knowledge, among all classes of society. The friends of Christianity in Glasgow, in connexion with the Established church alone, have, in the course of a few years, raised and expended a sum of £20,000 for the instruction chiefly of the poor. What has infidelity done in the same way, and in the same space of time, in any country under heaven? The truth is, that whatever may be her boasting, she is a stranger to the best, and indeed only motives to persuade one to diffuse abroad the blessings of education. What is here said of infidelity, is true also of all the

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latitudinarian systems of education, which are based, without many perhaps being aware of it, on infidel principles. They are radically defective in power and system. So much for the claims of infidelity in comparison with those of Christianity, in the matter of knowledge, and the love and diffusion of it.

May we not add, among the proofs how little she is animated by the sincere and candid love of knowledge, that infidels themselves have discovered the most perverse *ignorance* in their treatment of Christianity? Could they have done this, at least to the extent with which they are chargeable, had they possessed the least love of true knowledge? Dr Beattie, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Aberdeen, who himself wrote well on the Evidences, and was repeatedly brought into contact with unbelievers, remarks, "From several conversations, which it has been my chance to have with unbelievers, I have learned, that *ignorance* of the nature of our religion, and a disinclination to study both it and its conclusions, are to be reckoned among the chief causes of infidelity." It would not be so wonderful that this should hold true of a few desperate partisans. Such persons are to be found among all classes. But it appears conspicuously among the very leaders and patrons of unbelief, who boast of their literature and love of knowledge. The ignorance of *Voltaire* is almost incredible. The letters of certain Jews to him, and the learned "*Vindication*" of the Rev. Dr Findlay of this city, establish a degree of ignorance on his part, respecting the Old Testament, of which a Sabbath-school scholar might well be ashamed. *Gibbon*, so remarkable for his learning, does not seem, so far as one can gather from his *Memoirs* and *Diary*, to have ever read any judicious exposition or able defence of Christianity. We need wonder less at his conversion to Popery, and reconversion, and ultimate termination in infidelity. *Hume*, in a letter to the Rev. Dr Blair, a literary friend, says, "I have long since done with all inquiries on such subjects (religious), *and am become incapable of instruction*, though, I own, no one is more capable of conveying it than yourself." Does this state of mind argue the presence of any real love of knowledge? It is stated, on the authority of Dr Samuel Johnson, well known for his scrupulous veracity, that Hume acknowledged to a clergyman in the diocese of Durham, he had never read the New Testament through with attention. Is this love of candour, or love of truth? And yet Hume wrote against the Scripture miracles, and endeavoured to show that a miracle does not admit of proof? As to *Paine*, any one who has read his work will be at a loss to decide, whether ignorance or malice predominate more in its pages. He acknowledges that he determined to write against Christianity, and *then* procured a Bible and Testament, that he might know what he should write against. If such were the ignorance and want of candour of the champions, what may we believe is the state of things among men of the same sentiments, but of inferior note? Had literature or science been treated in the same way in which Christianity has been, where would have been their success and prosperity? Does not such hard treatment of revelation indicate, that the opposition proceeds, not from want of evidence, but from the fact that there is too much evidence to allow the guilty heart to remain at peace; therefore does the infidel endeavour to get rid of the subject, by reckless unprincipled resistance.

II. Another of the pretences of infidelity at the present day is, that she is the great friend and advocate of FREEDOM, while Christianity is the ally and encourager of despotism. This pretence will be found as vain as the preceding. That some systems, calling themselves Christian, have been associated with priestcraft and civil despotism—I allude more particularly to the Church of Rome—is what no one acquainted with the history of the world will deny, and far less an enlightened Christian. In this the latter sees a fulfilment of prophecy, and so a confirmation of the Divine truth of his holy faith; but nothing can be more unfair than to make true Christianity responsible for the spirit and the deeds of Popery—a spirit and deeds which she denounces and abhors. How would Deists like to be made responsible for the conduct of Pagans or of Atheists? We must look to the nature of true Christianity, as unfolded in the Scriptures, and in the genuine history of its operation; and, tried by this standard, we shall find her the warmest friend, and most successful supporter of freedom, civil and religious. The great commandment, to love our neighbour up to the same measure and degree in which we love ourselves; the picture of Christian love exhibited in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians; the tenderness which is repeatedly recommended in behalf of the scruples of less informed brethren; these are all inconsistent with the selfishness of despotism, and lie at the root of the generosity of true freedom. And bating the atrocities of Popery, what has been the history of Christianity, but the history of human liberty? The humanity inspired by the Gospel, and a sense of the value of the soul of man, led to the abolition of slavery, which previously had been almost universal; while the representative councils of the Christian church, seem to have led the way to representative forms of civil government, the freest of all forms. Compare Protestant Christendom with Paganism, ancient or modern: is there any real comparison in point of civil freedom? Nay more, turn to the great struggles for freedom throughout Christendom in modern times—who were the men who made the noblest sacrifices—who spent and endured most? Were they the scholar, the man of literature, the philosopher? No. Had *they* been the only supporters, the cause of freedom would have perished. It was religious men of all ranks—men deeply imbued with Christianity, who wrought out the liberties of Europe. Nay, what is very striking, it could be proved from the history of Britain, that every increase of liberty was preceded by an increase of religious knowledge and feeling; in

short, that Christianity was the parent of British liberties. Turning to Scotland, who needs to be reminded, that it was to the Christian men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that our country is indebted for the present free constitution under which we have the happiness to live? What infidel or Pagan can point to such sacrifices in behalf of freedom as they cheerfully endured? Where are the martyrs of infidelity; yea, where would have been the liberty which infidels now so often abuse, had it not been for the men of the Covenant, whom they profess to scorn?

Unbelievers often taunt Christians with their persecutions, and tell us how tolerant the ancient Pagans were, and how tolerant they are. The animosity and violence which have prevailed among Christians, are indeed much to be deplored. Nothing can be more opposite to the spirit of the Gospel; but if the Church of Rome, and those parties whom she more immediately infected with her spirit, be left out of the account —and in justice they must be so—from any estimate of the operation of genuine Christianity, the sum of persecution which can be laid to the score of Christians is very much abridged; and the extreme importance which is properly attached to Scripture principles and doctrines, mitigates, if it do not justify, a zeal in pressing them upon others, which would be absurd and unwarrantable in inculcating and diffusing any thing else. It is, however, a gross historical error to imagine that the ancient heathen were tolerant toward Christianity. On the contrary, they persecuted its adherents with the most unrelenting cruelty; and Roman emperors, eminent for literature and mildness in every other department, were among the foremost of the persecutors. Jerome states that the Roman emperors of the three first centuries were estimated in that space of time to have cut off not less than 1,820,000, or nearly two millions of Christians. Of course the brunt of the persecution was confined to, comparatively speaking, a few years, which makes the results the more appalling.

With regard again to the tolerant character of modern infidelity, the claim is equally unfounded. There is nothing in its principles to teach men generosity, to regard the rights and privileges of others. Its spirit is essentially selfish; a consistent infidel has no motive to show respect or kindness to others; and what then can he be but selfish, and in the same degree where he has the power, overbearing and despotic? These reasonings are borne out by facts. Have leading infidels been eminent for their love of liberty? They may in some cases have been employed as instruments in the providence of God, in sapping and hastening the overthrow of the superstitions of Popery, misnamed Christianity; but what were the principles to which they gave utterance in doing so, and what was the system which they substituted in the room of Popery? Did they breathe of true freedom? Far from it. *Rousseau*, immediately after denouncing persecution, in a letter to D'Alembert, thus speaks of fanaticism, which many would describe by the more honourable name of true religion:

"Fanaticism is not an error, but a blind, a senseless fury, which reason can never keep within bounds. The only way to hinder it from spreading, *is to restrain* those who broach it. In vain is it to demonstrate to madmen that they are deceived by their leaders, still will they be as eager as ever to follow them. I see but one way to stop its progress, and that is, to combat it with its own weapons. Little does it avail either to reason or convince. You must lay aside philosophy, shut your books—*take up the sword and punish the knaves.*" Why should religious men, fanatics though they be, in the estimation of Rousseau, be persecuted at all, and much more upon principle? If they are so miserable as the infidel represents them, that is the stronger reason why they should be pitied. How would the infidel have liked had Christians thought that scepticism was a species of fanaticism, which could be restrained only by taking up the sword and punishing the knaves, and had begun by applying it to Rousseau himself? *Voltaire*, it is well known, instead of sympathizing, as every lover of freedom ought to have done, with the persecuted Protestants of France, denounces them as "weak and obstinate men," because they suffered so much, rather than give way to the usurpations of the Church of Rome. *Hume*, it is equally well known, in his *History of England*, uniformly takes the side of the oppressor, and does all that lies in his power to blacken and misrepresent the character of the persecuted, though to them we are in a great degree indebted, under God, for our civil and religious liberties. Does this indicate any thing like an alliance between infidelity and the love of freedom? With regard to *Gibbon* again, in spirit and character he was intensely selfish. An able writer who has examined his Diary and Journals with care, declares, that "from the beginning to the end of his life, there is not one noble generous sentiment expressed." This holds out but a poor prospect for so generous a feeling as the love of liberty. Accordingly, we need not wonder to learn, that Gibbon, when a member of Parliament, was a silent supporter of measures adverse to freedom; and that in 1779, after denouncing the existing administration as little short of traitors, in fifteen days he accepted office under them; in other words, he was bribed into a change of sentiment. Does this speak much for his patriotism or love of freedom? As to *Paine*, whatever may have been the success with which his political pamphlets were attended, though they may have had an influence in shaking off despotic principles, and in giving currency to more liberal institutions, yet who does not know that, in his own spirit and conduct, he was an utter stranger to true toleration? What are the terms in which he speaks of Christian men, and especially Christian teachers? Are they not those of unmeasured abuse and violence? Does he not incessantly impute the worst motives to them, and what

does this indicate? Does it indicate the presence of that toleration and liberty of which he speaks so much? If Christians are so ignorant, superstitious, and deceived, as he represents them to be, he should feel for them the deeper compassion. Is this his spirit or his tone? Does he not rather show the temper of the persecutor?

Impressive facts proclaim that infidelity, so far from being tolerant, is intensely persecuting. It is not unknown to the student of history, that many of the most atrocious persecutors in the Church of Rome, were infidels under the guise of ecclesiastics. They persecuted the saints of God to the death, for not believing what they themselves did not believe. And when infidelity actually came forth from its concealment, and appeared openly at the head of the government of France, forty years ago, what was the character which she manifested to the world? One would have expected that, after all her outcry about toleration and freedom, she would have been remarkable for the tenderness, ability, and success, with which she upheld the cause of liberty—bearing with the ignorant, and protecting the weak; but what is the fact? She stood forth as the very demon of persecution, under the name of freedom, and persecuted not only the Roman Catholics, but the Protestants—in short, Christianity; shutting up the churches, abolishing the sacraments and sabbath, with a virulence and blood thirstiness hitherto unknown in the history of the world. French infidelity, while denouncing the Gospel as cruel, butchered two millions of the people of that unhappy country in seven short years. The pagan emperors of Rome, could boast of nothing like this; and yet infidels would have us to believe that they are tolerant, and the only true friends of freedom! Let them not only disown and abominate the conduct of their brethren of France, but change their own tempers and dispositions when speaking of Christianity and of Christians, before they expect to receive any credit for such idle assertions. I subjoin a statement of the numbers who fell by the hands of infidelity, from the work of one of themselves.

Prudhomme, a republican, gives the following table:

Guillotined by Sentences of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Nobility of both sexes . .	2028	
Wives of labourers and artisans	1467	
Priests	1135	
Religieuses	350	
Common persons . .	13,633	
		18,603
Women died of premature childbirth	3,748	
Women killed in La Vendee	15,000	
Children do. do. .	22,000	
Men slain do. do .	900,000	
Victims at Nantes . .	32,000	
Killed at Leon . . .	31,000	
		1,003,748
		1,022,351

Of course, the loss of life, as a whole, was far greater than these figures describe; 20,000 persons are estimated to have died of famine; and in ten years, not less than three millions perished in France alone: 800,000 by civil war. During the Convention, the guillotine struck off a thousand heads per day. The reader will now be able to judge with what truth infidelity represents Christianity as the friend of despotism, and herself as the great pillar of freedom! The claim is not only not true, but it is the very reverse of the truth.

III. There is still another pretension which we must shortly consider; and it is this, that infidelity conducts to human HAPPINESS AND PERFECTIBILITY, while, to say the least, Christianity can establish no such claim. It is well known that there is a class of speculators, many of whom avow no hostility to revelation, who dream that, by the spread of general knowledge, the improvement of arts and sciences, and well-poised political institutions, our race, apart from religion, may be conducted to a state of perfectibility and happiness on earth. Of course this theory proceeds upon a denial of the most obvious truths of revelation, such as the depravity of man, and may therefore justly be called infidel in its character, whether men are aware of it or not. Of the good which such influences as those to which we have referred, may be able to work out for the race of man, we do not pretend to judge. It is very probable that in some respects they would improve his outward condition; but we hold, that infidelity, whatever character it may assume, is utterly inadequate to meet the circumstances and the wants of man, and therefore can never lead him to that happiness of which it boasts. We shall show that the most eminent infidels, so far from being happy in their own minds, have been miserable; and that the only certain approximation which is made to happiness in this world, is through the medium of genuine Christianity. We have seen that infidelity is neither the friend of knowledge nor the friend of freedom: that its influence is hostile to both. It is obvious that this must stand very much in the way of that millennium of bliss of which it speaks. Two important elements, conducive to human happiness, do not acknowledge infidelity; they disown it. But, as a matter of fact, consider what has been the prevailing state of mind on the part of unbelievers, and say whether it be desirable it should be universal, or whether, if it really were so, the general happiness would thereby be promoted. We have seen how selfish some of the most distinguished unbelievers were —that they had no motives to be generous. Now it is in the exercise of the more generous dispositions, those which point to the welfare of others, that our true happiness lies. So far then infidelity leaves men strangers to abiding enjoyment; but let us refer to particular cases. The following is Voltaire's view of human life. Does it argue the presence of happiness? Does it point to the perfectibility of man?

"Who," says Voltaire, "can without horror consider the whole world as the empire of destruction? It abounds with wonders; it also abounds with victims. It is a vast field of carnage and contagion. Every species is without pity pursued and torn to pieces through the earth, and air, and water. In man there is more wretchedness than in all the other animals put together. He loves life, and yet he knows that he must die. If he enjoys transient good, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative, other animals have it not. He spends the transient moments of his existence in diffusing the miseries which he suffers; in cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay; in cheating and being cheated; in serving that he might command; and in repenting of all he does. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches, equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains rather carcasses than men. I tremble at the review of the dreadful picture, to find that it contains a complaint against Providence itself: AND I WISH I HAD NEVER BEEN BORN."

What a contrast is this view of human life, to that entertained by Haliburton! an eminent Professor of Theology at St Andrew's, one of the earliest writers on the Evidences in Scotland. If all men could honestly make use of such language as the following, might it not well be said, that our race had reached the perfection of earthly happiness?—

"I shall shortly get a very different sight of God from what I have ever had, and shall be made meet to praise him for ever; oh! the thoughts of an incarnate Deity are sweet. Oh! how I wonder at myself, that I do not love him more, that I do not admire him more. What a wonder that I can enjoy such composure under all my bodily pains, and in the view of death itself! What a mercy that, having the use of my reason, I can declare his goodness to my soul! I long for his salvation. I bless his name. I have found him, and die rejoicing in him. O, blessed be God that I WAS BORN! O that I was where he is! I have a father and mother, and ten brothers and sisters in heaven, and I shall be the eleventh. Oh! there is a telling in this providence, and I shall be telling it for ever! If there be such a glory in his conduct toward me now, what will it be to see the Lamb in the midst of the throne! BLESSED BE GOD THAT EVER I WAS BORN."

These are not peculiar cases. Turn to the experience of Hume. I do not refer to the affected merriment of his death-scene, and its real misery and awfulness—a death-scene of infidelity which the nurse, who witnessed it, declared she would, on no consideration, attend again; I refer to his own state of mind, as declared in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, between thirty and forty years before his death, when he was in full health and vigour.

"When I look abroad, I see on every side dispute, contradiction, anger, calumny, and detraction; when I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but DOUBT AND IGNORANCE. All the world conspires to oppose and contradict me; though, such is my weakness, I feel my opinions loosen and fall off of themselves when unsupported by the approbation of others. Every step I take is with hesitation, and every new reflection makes me dread an error and absurdity in my reasoning; for, with what confidence can I enter on such bold enterprises, when, besides those numberless infirmities peculiar to myself, I find so many that are common to human nature? The intense view of manifold contradictions, the infirmities in human reason, have so worked upon my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more likely and more probable than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger shall I dread? What beings surround me, and on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? *I am confounded by all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable; environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.*"

It is unnecessary to remind the reader of the degraded life of Paine, or his wretched death; but I beg to quote two sentences from a letter of Franklin to his brother infidel, on showing him in manuscript his *Age of Reason*, and requesting his opinion of it. This letter is little known, and unbelievers have denied its authority; but its genuineness has recently been established beyond all question. Franklin's remarks are, "I would advise you not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person." "If men are so wicked *with* religion, what would they be *without* it?" Here the sagacious but sceptical Franklin confesses infidelity to be a tiger—a description which the scenes of the first French revolution afterwards showed to be fearfully correct. He acknowledges also its inability to restrain wickedness. What prospect, then, does unbelief hold out, of conducting to the perfectibility of our race? where the social millennium under the auspices of infidelity?

The *Age of Reason* reminds me of the *Goddess of Reason*—the unhappy profligate young woman who, in France, consented to be publicly recognised as the personification of infidelity. Surely she should be a picture of happiness—an emblem of the glories of infidelity when universal. The following is the account of her, taken from the Paris papers of 1st August, 1817:—

"Died, within these few days, in the hospital for pauper lunatics at Salpetriere, where she had lived unpitied and unknown for many years, the famous Theroigne de Mericourt (the Goddess of Reason), the most remarkable of the heroines of the Revolution. She, who was taught publicly to blaspheme her Creator and to dishonour her sex (for she appeared in public nearly naked), was, for the last twenty years of her miserable life, subject to the greatest of human calamities—the deprivation of reason. She repented very severely of her horrible crimes, and her few lucid intervals were filled up by the most heart-rending lamentations. She died at the age of 57."

Righteous was the moral retribution of heaven—the Goddess of Reason for twenty years bereft of reason!

I might quote the last words of the chief of the Utilitarian School, Jeremy Bentham, who, I understand, belonged to the same unhappy class of infidels. Shortly before his death, he said to one of his disciples, who was watching over him, "I feel that I am dying; our care must be to *minumize* the pain. Do not let any of the servants come into the room, and keep

away the youths; it will be distressing to them, and they can be of no service. Yet I must not be alone. You will remain with me, and you alone; and then we shall have reduced the pain to the least possible amount." What a contrast between the dying infidel and the dying Christian! Would the latter, in such circumstances, say, that the chief care was to diminish the pain, and to keep his family from him? Would it not rather be to glorify God, by meekly bearing the appointed suffering? and would it not be his earnest desire to see his children, in the prospect of separation, and give them those counsels which, with the Divine blessing, might bring them to the same eternal blessedness which stretched out before him?

I shall conclude these illustrations, which might be greatly enlarged, by quoting the case of Lord Byron, and contrasting with it the case of Henry Martyn, the late eminent Christian missionary to Persia. Both were men of first-rate talent and accomplishment, and both were called to the experience of the severest trials. The one was an infidel, the other was a decided Christian. Let us see their respective state of feeling in life, and judge whether unbelief leads to the perfectibility of man. On the death of one of his early friends, Byron thus writes:—

"My friends fall around me, and I shall be left a lonely tree before I am withered. I have no resource but my own reflections; and they present no prospect here or hereafter, except the selfish satisfaction of surviving my betters. I am indeed most wretched."

On another occasion, he gave a more comprehensive view of the state of his mind:—

"Why, at the very height of desire and human happiness—worldly, amorous, ambitious, or even avaricious—does there mingle a certain sense of doubt and sorrow—a fear of what is to come, a doubt of what is? If it were not for hope, what would the future be? A hell! As for the past, what predominates in memory? Hopes baffled! From whatever place we commence, we know *where it must all end;* and yet what good is there in knowing it? It does not make men wiser or better. If I were to live my life over again, I do not know what I would change in my life, unless it were for, *not to have lived at all.* All history, and experience, and the rest, teach us that good and evil are pretty equally balanced in this existence, and that what is most to be desired is, *an easy passage out of it.* What can it give us but years? and these have little of good *but their ending.*"

On one of the anniversaries of his birth, he thus writes:—

"At 12 o'clock I shall have completed thirty-three years. I go to bed with a heaviness of heart, at having lived so long, and to so little purpose. It is now three minutes past 12, and I am thirty-three.

> 'Eheu fugaces Posthume, Posthume,
> Labuntur anni.'

But I do not regret them so much for what I have done, as for what I might have done."

Poetically he thus describes his own career:—

> "A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
> A pathless comet and a curse,
> The menace of the universe,
> Still rolling on with innate force,
> Without a sphere, without a course—
> A bright deformity—on high
> The monster of the upper sky."

How different the feeling of Martyn! On the death of one most dear to him, he says,—

"Can it be that she has been lying so many months in the cold grave? Oh, my gracious God! what should I do without thee! There is nothing in the world for which I could wish to live, except it may please God to appoint me some work to do. O thou incomprehensibly glorious Saviour! what hast thou done to alleviate the sorrows of life!"

On another occasion he writes:—

"I like to find myself employed usefully in a way I did not expect or foresee. The coming year is to be a perilous one; but my life is of little consequence, whether I finish the Persian New Testament or not. I look back with pity on myself, when I attached so much importance to my life and labour. The more I see of my own works, I am the more ashamed of them; for coarseness and clumsiness mar all the works of man. I am sick when I look at the wisdom of man; but am relieved by reflecting, that we have a city, whose builder and maker is God. The least of his works is refreshing. A dried leaf, or a straw, makes me feel in good company; and complacency and admiration take the place of disgust. What a momentary duration is the life of man! *Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum,* may be affirmed of the river; but men pass away as soon as they begin to exist. Well, let the moments pass,

> 'They waft us sooner o'er
> This life's tempestuous sea;
> Soon we shall reach the blissful shore
> Of blest eternity.'"

The last record from his dying hand was in these words—"I sat in the orchard and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God—in solitude my company—my Friend—my Comforter."

Such is a brief illustration of the pretension of infidelity to secure the perfection of man. I have not taken inferior men. I have drawn my examples from the most noted of their class. Suppose that all men were infidels—that society was entirely made up of such persons as Voltaire and Hume and Paine and Byron, would its general happiness be advanced? would we be making an approximation to social perfectibility? Would we not rather be decidedly frustrating the hope of both? It is, comparatively speaking, the small number of infidels, and their conformity to Christian usages and institutions where they do exist, which render them tolerable. On the other hand, suppose that true Christianity were universal—that the world were filled with such men as Haliburton or Martyn—who can doubt that the happiness would be universal, and that we would be upon the high road to the perfectibility of society? It is vain to urge the unhappy and immoral lives and wretched deaths of many professed Christians; these things will not prove infidelity to be the source either of personal or social happiness; the important point to mark is, that where Christians are wretched, as regards their comfort and hope, this is owing either to their not really being Christians, or to their falling far short of their rights and privileges as Christians. In no case is it owing to Christianity, but to the want of it; whereas, in the case of unbelievers, their disquietude and wretchedness

can be traced directly to their infidelity, and so it is justly held responsible for them.

While I have thus endeavoured to expose the false claims of modern infidelity to the character of the friend of knowledge, the friend of freedom, and the friend of social happiness, I have been indirectly recommending the Evidences of Christianity, by proving *her* to be the true friend of all these great interests. I desire to remind the reader, in taking leave of him, that it is not enough to study and be satisfied with the Evidences of the Divine authority of the Scriptures. A man may be convinced, from various external and other marks, that a letter has come from above, and yet be quite indifferent or hostile to the contents of that letter. He may receive the letter as from God, and still perish in his sins. It is indispensable that he receive the contents of the letter into his heart, so as to influence and regulate his life, as well as the outward letter into his hands; and this can be attained only through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Let every reader, then, clearly see the way, and the only way, in which he can partake of the real benefits of Christianity. Let him remember that it is through the faith of the Gospel, as a message of mercy to his own soul as a sinner, conveyed by the Spirit, that he can alone attain to the most conclusive of all proofs that the Bible is Divine, even the proof of a personal experience—the proof of its marvellous adaptation to his circumstances and necessities—at once bestowing peace and purity and hope; and let him therefore pray to the Father of Lights while he reads his word. And let Christians not be contented to know the truth for themselves: let them be zealous and unwearied in spreading abroad its proofs among others. The enemies of Revelation are active; let not the friends be remiss. "Truth is great and will prevail;" but in a fallen world it will only do so if appropriate means are perseveringly applied. I cannot better conclude, than in the solemn words of the great Andrew Fuller, spoken above forty years ago, but remarkably applicable to the present day. They should strike a note of warning into every Christian heart, and awake the faithful to new zeal and devotedness against infidelity in all its forms.

"The human heart," says he, "has ever been averse from the Gospel of Christ, but the turn or temper of the present age is peculiarly favourable to infidelity. In much the same manner as in former ages men were violently attached to a persecuting superstition, they are now verging to the opposite extreme, and are in danger of throwing off all religion. Our temptations, and those which will attend our posterity after us, are likely, therefore, to be widely different from what they have hitherto been. Hitherto nominal Christianity has been no reproach, but reproach has attached itself to the other side. The case, in this respect, may soon be altered. Men grow bold in avowing their contempt of Christianity, and many among the dissipated part of the youth are following their example. Now, if characters of this description should spring up in sufficient numbers, not only to keep each other in countenance, but to turn the tide of reproach against Christians, as a company of wrong-headed enthusiasts, we shall soon see which side the mass of mankind will take. Their characters being loose and profligate, they have long felt themselves condemned by the Gospel, and this is a matter that does not sit very easy upon them. Nothing has kept them from rejecting it before, but the disgrace that would follow upon their becoming open infidels. Whenever, therefore, this disgrace shall be removed, we may expect them to go off in great companies. The slightest observation of human nature must convince us, that the greater part of mankind, even in religious matters, are governed by fashion. They go with the course of the world. So great an influence has the tide of public opinion upon them, that even where it is not altogether agreeable to their own views and inclinations, they are nevertheless frequently carried away by it; but if it be thus where public opinion and private inclination are at variance, it must, of course, be much more so in those cases wherein they are agreed. This will be a union of the wind and tide; and the vessel which is carried along by such a joint influence, can scarcely have any thing left to impede its progress. * * * * It is not unlikely that almost all our religious controversies will soon be reduced to one, upon which the great body of men will divide. Is Christianity true or false? Is there a God? Is there a heaven and a hell? or is it all a fiction? Agitated by these important questions, the greater part of the inhabitants of Europe, and perhaps of America, including our own posterity, may rank either as real Christians or as open infidels." Vol. vii. pp. 141, 142.

Can any parent who loves Christianity, or loves his children, read these solemn sentences and not be aroused to the warfare against infidelity? Earnestly do I pray that the God of Truth may bless the present publication, and use it as armour which shall do good service, in defence of his own cause. He often honours the humblest means.

It may be noticed, that the writers of the following excellent Tracts belonged to different denominations of professed Christians. Their perfect concurrence here is the more valuable. Principal Robertson, Principal Campbell, of Aberdeen, Dr Campbell, of Edinburgh, Mr Bonar, of Perth, were all ministers of the Church of Scotland. Mr Leslie was a minister of the Church of England; and Mr Carson, who is still alive, is a Dissenting minister in Ireland, of the Congregational body.

JOHN G. LORIMER.

GLASGOW, 16*th January*, 1839.

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THE

CHRISTIAN'S ARMOUR

AGAINST

INFIDELITY.

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCES.

BY THE

LATE REV. JOHN CAMPBELL, D.D.,
One of the Ministers of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh.

THOUGH the single argument handled in each of the Tracts, now for the first time collected together, would, by itself, establish the Divine truth of Christianity; yet it is desirable to have a brief but comprehensive summary of the whole question of the Evidences. We begin with a general outline of the entire field—an outline drawn by the pen of the late Rev. Dr CAMPBELL, of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh. I am not aware that there is any shorter, or more correct and full, and beautiful statement, in the English language. In the original paper, he supports every position of importance by numerous learned notes, which it is not necessary to quote.

* * * * * * *

THE Scriptures contain strong *internal characters of divinity*.

Certain books are put into our hands, confessedly of high antiquity, and purporting to have been given by inspiration of God. Though written by different penmen, at distant periods, and on various subjects, a wonderful uniformity of design pervades the whole. The style employed by the several writers, is remarkably simple, majestic, and awful. These books contain authentic records of ancient transactions, which perfectly harmonize with the best accounts of profane historians. They inculcate a pure and sublime morality; exemplified by a character of perfect excellence, the conception and delineation of which, by the writers of the life of Jesus, seems no less to transcend the power of man, than any of the wonders they record. They communicate most important information, respecting both the duty and the happiness of man. They give descriptions of the character and perfections of God, which, though nature could never have discovered, do well accord with the best principles of right reason. They remove the vail, which hides the spiritual and eternal world from our view, and open most interesting prospects, into which our unassisted faculties could never have penetrated, respecting the counsels and dispensations of God, the origin and destiny of the human race. And withal, in those instances in which they are received as true, they acquire an authority over conscience, possessed by no other writings, which fails not to produce a most beneficial change in the character, sentiments, and pursuits of men. Blessed indeed is that man, who resigns himself, without reserve, to the influence of these inestimable writings! *He hath the witness in himself*, and wants no other evidence of their heavenly origin. This *experience* of the truth of Scripture, is not only more satisfying to the mind than any other species of proof, but indeed, is indispensably necessary to the attainment of its ultimate design, *the end of our faith, the salvation of the soul*. Nay, the essential truths of revelation, seem to have their foundation so deeply laid, in the original principles and sentiments of the human mind, that their power has often been felt and confessed by men, who have professed to reject or disregard the gospel. In moments of serious reflection, conscience, even in wicked men, sometimes joins its testimony to that of Scripture, with an authority, which neither the sophistry of scepticism, nor the blandishments of sensuality, are able to silence. * * * *

It must be owned, however, that the minds of avowed unbelievers, cannot be expected to possess that impartiality, and freedom from prejudice, which is in some degree necessary to discern the proper import and value of the *internal evidence* of Christianity. Other proofs, therefore, more extrinsic and palpable, were offered to the world on its first promulgation. And here it is impossible not to admire the infinite wisdom of God, displayed in the specific nature of that evidence, on which our assent to the gospel is claimed. It is that of *supernatural facts*, accredited by proper *testimony*; a species of evidence, which, precluding as well the impositions of fancy, as the subtilties of reasoning, lies open to investigation, is less liable to mistake, and seems well adapted to produce conviction on the minds of those to whom they are exhibited. These facts regard the character and ministry of Jesus Christ; the wonderful circumstances of his life, and death, and resurrection; the miracles performed by himself, and afterwards by his apostles in his name. If these can be disproved, or if it can be shown, that the grounds on which they are believed, are insufficient to sustain the conclusions that are built upon them, then our "faith is vain,"* and the Christian cause must fall to the ground. On the other hand, if the evidence offered in support of the miracles of the gospel, appear sufficient to authorize our belief of them, then it follows, that the gospel must be true, because "no man can do *such* miracles, except God be with him."† If

* 1 Cor. xv. 17. † John iii. 2.

it were reasonable for the first Christians to believe, it must be reasonable for us to do so now. The whole argument, then, resolves itself into these two questions: Are we, at this distant period of time, *possessed of the same documents* on which the ancient Christians received the gospel; and if we are, is there reason to believe that the wonderful *facts contained in them are true?* Here a fair ground of discussion is opened, both to the friends and foes of Christianity. To enter fully into the detail of the argument, would be quite impracticable. But it may not be unuseful to recapitulate the leading points of evidence, which are largely established by many advocates of the Christian cause.

Let it then be recollected, that the *circumstances* relative to the personal history of Jesus Christ, the miracles performed by Himself during his life, and by his apostles after his departure from the world, *are delivered in certain books*, purporting to have been written by persons who had witnessed these transactions, or who had been intimately connected with such original witnesses; that these histories were soon published to the world, and in the country where the events which they record are understood to have happened; that from the very beginning, they were quoted with great respect, by a succession of Christian writers, and publicly read and expounded in their religious assemblies; that after the most scrupulous investigation, they were received by the early Christians as genuine and authentic; that catalogues of the canonical books are given by many of the writers of those times, in all of which the historical books are included, and when the canon of the New Testament was finally settled, it contained precisely the same books which belong to it at this day; that these were uniformly appealed to by the primitive Christians, as the ground and standard of their faith, in all their controversies with their enemies, and with one another; nay, that they were explicitly acknowledged and appealed to as such, by acute and learned adversaries, who made them the object of their attack: all these things are clearly ascertained by indubitable testimony. It therefore follows, that these sacred books were indeed written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, and that they contain faithful records of those facts and doctrines, which were *most surely believed* by the primitive Christians. We are therefore in possession of the *same documents*, on which the gospel was at first believed.

If we proceed to attend to the nature of the apostolic testimony, and the circumstances in which it was delivered, we shall also find abundant reason to conclude, that the testimony which they give is *true*.

They could not be *deceived* as to the facts which they reported. Whatever difficulty there may be in giving such a definition of a miracle, as will obviate all the exceptions of a subtle and captious adversary, there can be no difficulty in perceiving when a man that was born blind, receives the faculty of sight; when one that was deaf and dumb, is enabled to hear and to speak; or when one that had been dead for several days, is restored to life. This requires no superior endowments of mind. In such cases, a plain, illiterate fisherman, is as well qualified to judge, as the most learned and ingenious philosopher.

There appears no reason to call in question the *integrity* of the apostles. The design in which they were engaged, might well preclude the suspicion of dishonesty. They were attempting to reform a degenerate world, and calling men to the love of truth, and the practice of universal goodness. Nor was there any thing in their character or conduct, that seemed unsuited to the views which they avowed. Their writings indicate an unaffected simplicity. They conceal nothing, however unfavourable to themselves or their brethren, and faithfully record their own imperfections and errors. They were actuated by no selfish views, but were uniformly moved by a strong disinterested benevolence. Their most inveterate enemies found it impossible to fix the smallest imputation on their character. Could such men propagate falsehood, to subserve the cause of truth, and relinquish all pretensions to integrity, in order to lead men to purity and virtue?

They could have no *interest* in attempting to impose on the world. The considerations of interest indeed, lay altogether on the opposite side. Had they quietly submitted to the prohibition of the Sanhedrim, and preached no more in the name of Jesus, they might have lived at home, in security, and ease, and credit. By persevering in their testimony, they renounced every prospect of advantage in the world, and exposed themselves, not to a doubtful, but certain prospect of sufferings and death. What could induce them to this, but the fullest conviction of the truth and importance of the things which they testified? And therefore, when the Sanhedrim endeavoured to intimidate them, by threatening grievous penalties, if they should continue to "teach in the name of Jesus," they made no other reply, than the artless but unanswerable apology, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."*

But though the apostles had been willing, it was not in their *power* to impose on the world. If infidels insinuate that they were either wild enthusiasts, or designing impostors, will they also affirm, that it was in their power to make thousands of other men enthusiasts and impostors too? The observations that have been already made deserve regard, though the testimony of the apostles had related to facts, of which they themselves and their associates had been the *only* witnesses. But it must be remembered, that the ministry of Jesus had been very public, and the miracles which he performed, "were not done in a corner."† Multitudes had seen them, throughout the cities and villages of Judea, and some of the cases had become the subject of judicial investigation. By publishing these things, (if the cause had been bad,) they furnished their adversaries with every advantage. Could they persuade their countrymen, that several thousands of men and women had, on two different occasions, been fed with a few loaves and fishes; that a blind man, cured by Jesus, had been strictly examined, and afterwards, through envy, excommunicated by the Sanhedrim; or that Lazarus of Bethany had been raised from the dead? These things could never have been advanced and insisted on, if they had not been true. If they were certainly false, the detection was easy, and must have inevitably ruined the cause of the apostles. The enmity of those who then opposed the gospel, must surely have disposed them to manifest the alleged imposition, had it been in their power. This, however, was never done, nor attempted to be done.

But the apostles were not merely the witnesses of the life, and miracles, and resurrection of Jesus. *They themselves* were endowed with the *power of working miracles*, and performed many no less signal than those that had been done by their Lord. This power they ascribe altogether to Him.‡ And they were enabled also to impart it to others.§ These miraculous gifts were exercised with great publicity, and proved effectual for converting many to the faith of Christ. Accounts of them were speedily communicated to the world;‖ and the apostles in some of their letters to Christian churches, refer to the exercise of such gifts,

* Acts iv. 20. † Acts xxviii. 26. ‡ Acts ii. 33.
§ Acts viii. 15. ‖ Acts ii., iii., *et passim.*

as well known and uncontroverted facts.* Let the reflecting mind pause on these amazing circumstances; and consider, if it be possible to account for them on the principles of enthusiasm or imposture.

These considerations are greatly strengthened by observing, that though the miraculous facts undoubtedly form a principal part of the history of the New Testament, they do by no means occupy the whole of it, but are interwoven with multifarious details, both of *domestic and national history*. They do not appear in insulated narratives, which might easily be extracted from the rest, and yet a consistent series of ordinary occurrences be still preserved. The whole must stand or fall together. The circumstances of time and place in regard to particular transactions, are minutely specified; the names of individuals, both in public and private life, are mentioned; and many incidents related, which must have been well known, not only to smaller circles, but to the whole Jewish nation. Thus, the birth, and ministry, and death of the Baptist John; the circumstances that preceded the birth of Jesus; the visit of the Magi; the inquiries and consternation of Herod; his massacre of the children at Bethlehem; the testimonies of Simeon and Anna; the baptism of Jesus; his various intercourses both with friends and enemies; the individuals and families with whom he was wont to associate; his public ministrations in the temple, and throughout all the cities and villages of Judea; his last solemn entrance into Jerusalem; especially the circumstances of his death; the treachery of Judas, and his engagement with the chief priests and rulers; the examination of Jesus before Caiaphas, and the council, and Pilate; the dream and message of Pilate's wife; the governor's testimony to his innocence; the crucifixion and burial of Christ; the subornation and testimony of the soldiers; the events of the day of Pentecost; the cure of the lame man by Peter and John; the imprisonment of the apostles; the deliberations and proceedings of the Sanhedrim. It were endless to pursue the specification. Was it possible that these things could have been published to the world, and believed, on the spot, and soon after they are stated to have happened, had they been untrue? The argument would appear in all its force, were we to transfer the history to our own country, and our own time. It is unnecessary to particularize it. Every mind, at all capable of reflection, must perceive the absolute impossibility of procuring credit to narratives far less wonderful, which are supposed to have had no foundation in fact.

Thus did the testimony of the apostles pass from one country to another, confirmed by additional miracles performed by themselves; and "multitudes every where believed the gospel." Men renounced at once idolatry and vice, their corrupt passions, and their worldly interests. They voluntarily shared in the fortunes of their teachers, and joyfully submitted to all the afflictions that attended the profession of the name of Jesus. In these circumstances, surely, the success of the gospel is an irrefragable attestation of its truth. The effect is accounted for by an adequate cause; on the opposite hypothesis, it is altogether inexplicable. It has been maintained by a subtle sceptic, that miracles being contrary to experience (as he understands the phrase), it is more improbable that they should be true, than that the testimony by which they are supported should be false. The fallacy of this principle has been well exposed by many able writers. But may not the observation, in so far as it seems capable of any proper meaning, be justly retorted on the advocates of infidelity? That men should be deceived with respect to such miraculous facts as are recorded in the New Testament, or believe the report of them without evidence, and under this conviction, change their religion, and course of life, and willingly expose themselves to obloquy, tortures, and death itself, is not all this utterly repugnant to reason and experience; a marvellous phenomenon without any assignable cause or end; and infinitely more incredible, than any miracle or mystery connected with Christianity?

On these grounds, then, it is reasonable to believe that the facts contained in the Christian history are *true*, and therefore that the Christian religion is *Divine*.

It remains that we consider, how the Providence of its great Author, is manifested in the *transmission* of that evidence, by which these facts are established, from age to age.

This eminently appears in the preservation of the *Books of Scripture*, and in their transmission, *entire and uncorrupted*, through many generations, even to the present times. These, as we have seen, contain strong internal characters of Divinity. They are the authentic records of the History of Revelation, and the infallible standard of revealed truth. The possession of them, therefore, genuine and pure, is of infinite importance to the evidence of the gospel. Let us for a moment imagine that these books, many ages ago, had irrecoverably perished. Under what disadvantages must we now have laboured, when called to vindicate the truth of our religion! How would the enemies have insulted and said, "*Where is now your God?* where is the evidence and rule of the faith of Christians? Let them produce those books on which they allege that their religion is founded, that we may know whether they are indeed Divine." These books are now produced, and the world is left to judge of their credibility. That this fact, however, may have its full weight, it is certainly necessary, that the *integrity* of the *Canon*, and the *purity* of the *Text* of Scripture be sufficiently ascertained. It is of great importance to know, that no inspired book has been excluded from the sacred volume. It is of still greater importance to be assured, that no uninspired book has been admitted into it; and that the text itself has undergone no material alteration. It must therefore be highly satisfactory to Christians to perceive, that more abundant evidence is offered for the integrity and purity of the Scriptures, than can be produced in behalf of any other ancient book whatever. They were held in high veneration, preserved with great care, publicly read in the churches, and early and extensively circulated amongst the ancient Christians. Of the scrupulous accuracy with which they judged of the pretensions of all writings which claimed admission into the sacred canon, their rejection of various spurious books is an incontestible proof; and the specimens of those that have come down to us, abundantly serve to justify their decision. The character of the primitive disciples of Jesus, precludes all suspicion of their attempting to corrupt these writings, or of their suffering them to be corrupted by others. When copies were multiplied, this indeed became impracticable; as any attempts to vitiate the text, must have been speedily detected by the collation of copies.* The dissensions that soon arose amongst Christians, naturally led to a mutual jealousy, and consequently to an inviolable care of those inspired writings, to which they all appealed as the common standard of their faith. Numerous *manuscript copies* are still extant, older by many ages than the invention of printing. Some of them indeed ascend to very high antiquity. By these, as well as by the *ancient versions* which have come down to us, the integrity of the canon, and

* 1 Cor. xii., xiv.

* Dr Doddridge's *Lectures*, 4to. p. 269.

purity of the text of the New Testament, may be ascertained with great precision. Thus the watchful care of our Divine Lord conspicuously appears, in the preservation and transmission of these invaluable monuments of the Christian history and faith, to the times in which we live.

Next to the Sacred Books, it is of great importance, that so many of the *writings* of the *ancient Christians* have been preserved to our times. By men of different views indeed, the *Fathers* have been extolled or depreciated beyond all reasonable bounds. But whatever we may think of their judgment in matters of opinion or reasoning, it were certainly unjust in the extreme, to suspect their integrity, when relating facts with respect to which they could not be deceived. For they entered deeply into the spirit of the religion which they professed, and many of them died for its sake. Their testimony, therefore, concerning those books which constitute the Sacred Canon, is entitled to high regard. So numerous are their quotations from them, that it is believed, that though all the entire existing copies were destroyed, the substance of the New Testament might be recovered from the writings of these ancient Fathers.* They also serve to throw much light on the early history of Christianity, as they describe the spirit and conduct of believers, the practice of the churches, the progress of the gospel, and the sufferings which Christians endured from their heathen persecutors. Though the apologies which were published by some of them, are not constructed on principles calculated to obviate all the exceptions of modern Deists, yet they seem well adapted to the circumstances in which they were written. They could not reply to objections which were not then thought of, but they solidly repel such as had actually been advanced. They nobly defend their religion in their own times, and authenticate the memorials of its origin and progress, for the benefit of succeeding ages.

Nor are we indebted to the writings of friends alone. *Contemporary historians*, both *Jewish* and *Heathen*, corroborate that historic testimony which supports the credibility of the gospel history. The works of *Josephus* are of great value. In his *Antiquities of the Jews*, he bears ample testimony to the history of the Old Testament. He was no friend to the Christian cause; yet he could not have been unacquainted with the remarkable circumstances that had recently occurred in his own country, respecting Jesus Christ and his apostles, and the progress of their doctrine, not only in Judea, but throughout the world. The omission of these subjects in his history, must certainly have been designed. It is most naturally accounted for by supposing, that he did not choose to narrate facts, the tendency of which he did not approve, but the truth of which he could not deny. "Perhaps he did not know how to represent the business, and disposed of his difficulties by passing it over in silence."† Viewed in this light, his silence has all the force of an indirect testimony. But his relation of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, affords a strong confirmation to the evidence of the gospel; and its importance in this connexion, we shall soon have occasion to perceive. Considering "the obscure and distant view," which the character, situation, and prejudices of the philosophers and historians of those times, led them to take of a new Jewish sect, "every where spoken against," we cannot reasonably expect from them, copious accounts of the affairs of Christians. Yet even in their writings, we meet with references to some circumstances in the history of Christ, as well as to the number, sufferings, and innocence of his followers.* All that they deliver harmonizes with the Christian history; and nothing contradictory to it can any where be discovered. The preservation of these writings, therefore, is of great use in supporting the evidence of the gospel.

But it is still more material to remark, that the truth of the Evangelical history is confirmed even by the *labours* of its most *inveterate enemies*. In the earliest ages, attempts were made to depreciate the excellence, and discredit the evidence of Christianity, by men possessing all the advantages, which eminent talents and learning, as well as local situation, could afford. It now becomes an interesting subject of inquiry, to discover on what specific grounds their opposition was stated. It is a remarkable fact, that though the works of these adversaries are lost, yet no inconsiderable portions of them are preserved in the writings of those Christians by whom they were refuted. From these we are not only enabled to collect with certainty, the general grounds of their opposition, but are even acquainted with many of the particular objections, which they thought proper to advance. *Celsus*, the first of these, lived somewhat later than the middle of the second century. In his book, which was entitled, *The True Word*, he ascribes the miracles of Christ to magic, and objects to many passages of the New Testament, which he treats with the most abusive ridicule. Yet his references to the facts contained in it, are so numerous and explicit, that an abridgement of the life of Christ may be extracted from them. *Porphyry*, who flourished a century later, wrote *against the Christians* in fifteen books, in which (besides his attack upon the book of *Daniel*) he brought forward many objections against the writings of the New Testament, which he also treated with great contempt. *Hierocles*, another writer who lived about the same period, charged the books of Scripture, with inconsistencies and contradictions; and attempted, especially, to depreciate the miracles of Jesus, by contrasting them with those, which were alleged to have been performed by *Apollonius* of *Tyana*. The emperor *Julian*, who lived nearly a century later, had been originally educated in the profession of Christianity, which he afterwards thought proper to renounce. Though not so sanguinary a persecutor, as some preceding emperors had been, he was, however, a bitter enemy to Christians. He wrote a long work against them, in which, he went over much of the same ground that had been occupied by former adversaries, directing the most poignant satire against the religion of Christians, and those books which were held by them as Divine. All these writers seem to have been well acquainted with the books of Scripture, especially those of the New Testament, as well as the history and affairs of Christians. Most of their objections are extremely trifling, and even the most plausible of them admit of easy refutation. By directing the force of their attacks against the Scriptures of the New Testament, they afford undoubted testimonies to the existence and antiquity of these books, and to their authority amongst Christians, as constituting the foundation of their faith. Their numerous quotations from them, and references to particular passages, confirm the genuineness and authenticity of the canonical books, and show, that they were essentially the same with those which are at present in our hands. Nothing could have served their cause so much, as to disprove the facts contained in the gospel history, had it been in their power to do so. This, however, they have not attempted; but endeavour to account for them,

* Dr Doddridge's *Lectures*, p. 269.
† Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 122.

* Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*, vol. i., part i., chap. 2; and vol. ii., part iii., chap. 4.

on principles that will not be adopted by modern infidels. The facts then, must now be held as established, by the concessions of those early adversaries, who wanted neither opportunity nor inclination to overthrow the evidence on which they stand. This testimony to the gospel, is precious beyond all calculation. The observation which is made, by a late laborious and able advocate of Christianity, with respect to the emperor *Julian*, may be justly applied to each of these ancient adversaries. "Upon the whole, he has undesignedly borne witness to the truth of many things, recorded in the books of the New Testament. He aimed to overthrow the Christian religion, but has confirmed it. His arguments against it are perfectly harmless, and insufficient to unsettle the weakest Christian. He justly excepts to some things introduced into the Christian profession, by the late professors of it, in his own time, or sooner. But he has not made one objection of moment against the Christian religion, as contained in the genuine and authentic books of the New Testament."* Whilst labouring with so much zeal to subvert it, how far were these men from imagining, that they were actually confirming its evidence, and furnishing materials for its support and vindication, in ages long to come! "Who can forbear adoring the depth of Divine wisdom, in laying such a firm foundation for our faith in the gospel history, in the writings of those who were so inveterate enemies to it, and so indefatigable in their attempts to overthrow it!"† "Where *then* is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain."‡ Thus the Christian religion is established by the opposition of enemies: enemies themselves, become undesignedly the witnesses of its truth.

The historic evidence of Christianity, is not only preserved in the written testimonies, both of friends and foes, but is still more conspicuously exhibited, in those *positive Institutions*, which have originated from itself, and in those *changes in the state of society*, which it has been instrumental in producing. The rites of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, are coeval with the gospel; they can be traced no higher; and have not ceased to be celebrated amongst Christians, from its commencement to the present times. The occasion and design of these institutions are clearly laid down in the evangelical records; and their appointment is connected with some important circumstances in the life of Christ. The *Sabbath* too, changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, is a perpetual memorial of the resurrection of Jesus. If the facts to which they are supposed to refer are untrue, let unbelievers inform us, what was the origin of these institutions; what is their use; and how came they to be generally received and observed in the world? The gospel, by the authority of its precepts, and the gradual diffusion of its spirit, effectuated many important *changes* in the *state* of human *society*. It abolished idolatry and polytheism, together with those impure, unnatural, and sanguinary usages, that were not only tolerated by the laws, but sanctioned by the religion of the ancient Gentiles. It has provided greatly for the comfort of private life, by prohibiting polygamy, restraining divorces, and discouraging domestic slavery. In all those countries which assumed the Christian name, crimes that were formerly neither uncommon nor disreputable, were suppressed by legislative authority, or repudiated by public opinion. The spirit of Christianity, to a great degree, insinuated itself into the prevailing sentiments, character, and habits of men, so as to produce effects highly favourable to public virtue and happiness. In those places where the gospel is professed, even vicious extravagancies which escape judicial cognizance, are frequently punished with the forfeiture of reputation; and in general, the practice of humanity, and decency of manners, are supported by the testimonies of public approbation. That these effects are to be ascribed to the positive or indirect influence of the Christian religion, cannot be doubted, if we compare the state of society in those nations where it is professed, with the situation of those countries which have been unacquainted with it, whether in ancient or modern times. The present state of visible religion indeed, in those nations which are called Christian, will not bear to be tried with the perfect standard of Scripture. But without attempting at all, to palliate the lamentable degeneracy of modern times, let us reflect on the state of society in Greece and Rome, in the periods of their highest refinement; or let us attend to the situation of those Pagan countries at this day, where civilization is most considerably advanced, but where true Christianity is altogether unknown. A view of human society is there exhibited, from which we turn away with disgust or with horror. Even the most corrupted form of Christianity restrains, or discountenances, at least, crimes, to which in Pagan countries, public sentiment attaches no criminality. But where evangelical truth is generally known, there the power of the gospel is proportionably seen, in promoting private virtue and comfort, as well as public order and prosperity. The influence of the religion of Jesus, in meliorating the condition of society, has often been justly stated, as illustrating its excellent nature and genius. In this view, it properly belongs to the *internal evidence* of the gospel. But in the present argument, the beneficial changes that have been produced by it, are only adduced as *public* and *permanent monuments*, which corroborate the history of its introduction, preservation, and influence in the world.

Thus the evangelical facts are established by a mass of historic testimony, which no other facts can pretend to rival. They are not now to be overthrown by the subtilties or sarcasms of modern infidels. They are incorporated with the annals of society. They form an essential part of the history of the world, and cannot now be overlooked by historians, however disaffected to the Christian cause, who undertake to relate the transactions of those times. If one of this description, presume to misrepresent material facts, the original authorities are at hand, and his errors are detected with ease. If, departing from the proper sphere of history, he choose to philosophize on his subject, and refer the progress of Christianity to causes, independent of its native truth and excellence, and of the power of its Divine Author, we are entitled to canvass his reasonings; nor has it been found difficult, to expose the fallacy of those principles, on which such erroneous conclusions are built.

Though the facts relating to the introduction and propagation of the gospel, were only considered as original and independent, altogether unconnected with any previous arrangement or design of Providence, yet supported as they are by such a body of historic evidence, they do certainly amount to a full proof of the truth of our religion. But this evidence receives a vast accession of strength, when the same facts are viewed as connected with a precedent Divine Revela-

* Dr Lardner's *Heathen and Jewish Testimonies*, vol. iv. p. 94.
† Dr Doddridge in Lardner's *Heathen and Jewish Testimonies*, vol. ii. p. 350.
‡ 1 Cor. i. 20; and iii. 19, 20.

tion, and as the completion of *ancient prophecies*. "God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake to the fathers by the prophets."* The Divine authority of the books of the Old Testament, is supported not only by the testimony of the New, but by indubitable independent evidence. On this argument, however, I am not at present to enter. A series of prophecy is contained in these books, which commences almost with the beginning of the world, and reaches forward to the end of time. Many of these predictions relate to the Jewish people, and the neighbouring nations; and their accomplishment is verified, by the testimony of profane historians. The correspondence between the prophecies in the book of *Daniel* particularly, respecting the four great empires, and the events to which they refer, is wonderfully exact and striking. The force of this evidence, the acute mind of *Porphyry* was unable to evade in any other way, than by assuming, without proof, that the prophecy must have been written posterior to the history. The advent of Messiah, his character, and a great variety of particular circumstances relative to his life, and death, and resurrection, are foretold with all the minuteness of historical precision. And in the evangelical biography, they appear to have been verified with the utmost punctuality. These ancient oracles "testify before hand," *not only* "the sufferings of Christ," *but* "the glory that should follow,"† in the effusion of the Spirit, the calling of the Gentiles, the success of the gospel, and its beneficial effects on the characters of men, and the condition of society. The remarkable agreement between the predictions and the events, must be perceived by every one, who compares the writings of Moses and the prophets, with those of the evangelists and apostles. And the existence of the *Septuagint version* of the Old Testament, almost three hundred years before the birth of Christ, entirely precludes the suspicion, that these prophecies might have been written at a period subsequent to the events to which they refer.

Nor are the Scriptures of the New Testament to be considered only as *records* of the accomplishment of former prophecies. They contain *additional predictions* which have been fulfilled in the history of succeeding times. Our Lord foretold the *destruction of Jerusalem* forty years before it happened; not in general terms, but with a minute specification of circumstances, awful beyond example, most unlikely to happen, which a sagacity merely human could never have imagined. The three gospels which record the prophecy, were incontestibly written long before the event. And *Josephus*, who cannot be suspected of partiality to the Christian cause, could not have narrated the details of that awful catastrophe with more exactness, if he had really intended to comment on the predictions of Jesus. The *rejection and dispersion of the Jews*, and that they should *continue distinct* from the rest of the nations, till the "times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," are also explicitly foretold. And do they not remain to this day, conspicuous monuments of the truth of sacred prophecy. The *grand apostasy of the Christian Church*, the specific corruptions that should take place, the wide extent to which they should spread, the rise and progress of *Papal Antichrist*, are all described in such graphical characters, as leave no room to doubt of the object to which they refer.* Of these, the history of the Church of Rome affords the best explanation. And in its present state, who does not clearly perceive the predicted symptoms of its approaching fall?

It has been suggested, that whatever credibility may be considered as due to the miraculous facts, in the ancient history of Christianity, it were desirable that a succession of these should take place; or at least that specimens of them should occasionally be repeated, for the satisfaction of men in future ages. Without staying to discuss the precarious principle which this demand assumes, is it not sufficient to observe, that, though it be not complied with in the way which unreasonable men presume to dictate, its object is substantially attained, in a manner no less adapted to silence the cavils of infidelity? "The Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus."† If prophecies be accomplished, then that testimony is established for ever. Let history then decide the controversy. In the events of former ages, and even in the present situation of the world, a variety of facts present themselves to view, which appear to be the completion of sacred prophecy. Must not these therefore possess all the force of perpetual miracles, in confirming the truth of Christianity? The faithful accomplishment of prophecies in the past and present times, authorize us assuredly to conclude, that those relating to periods yet future, shall also be fulfilled in their season. And thus the evidence of the Divine origin of the gospel remains not merely unimpaired. It is not a stationary but a germinant demonstration. It keeps pace with time itself; and advances progressively in strength, with the history of society. "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth: ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness, and the cities thereof, lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands. The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man; he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall cry aloud; *he shall shout amain;* he shall prevail against his enemies."‡

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* Heb. i. 1. † 1 Peter i. 11.

* 2 Thess. ii.; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3; Rev. xiii., xvii., xviii.
† Rev. xix. 10.
‡ Isa. xlii. 9—13. See Bishop Lowth's *Translation*.

THE

VARIETY AND DISSIMILARITY OF THE EVIDENCES,

A PROOF

OF THE

TRUTH OF DIVINE REVELATION.

SUCH is the title which may appropriately be given to the following paragraphs, extracted from the very able work of DAVISON *On Prophecy*. They form a good conclusion to the excellent sketch of Dr Campbell; proving, as they do, that the very number and diversity of the lines of proof, to which he refers, is an evidence that the Scriptures are Divine. It is only truth which could stand so severe a test.

THERE is one quality or condition comprehended in these mixed and various evidences of our religion, which deserves to be further considered by itself; a condition highly characteristic of its truth, and indeed replete with the strongest confirmation of it. The condition is this, that its evidences are so exceedingly dissimilar in their several descriptions. They are not necessarily connected in their origin; they are independent in their principle; they do not infer each the other; they are connected only in the subject which they conspire to attest. This independence of the component members of the argument is a material consideration. Perhaps it has not been urged in the defences of Christianity, with the force it is entitled to. It affords, however, a very decisive criterion of truth, as the following remarks may serve to show.

If man's contrivance, or if the favour of accident, *could* have given to Christianity any of its apparent testimonies; either its miracles or its prophecies, its morals or its propagation, or, if I may so speak, its Founder, there could be no room to believe, nor even to imagine, that all these appearances of great credibility could be united together by any such causes. If a successful craft could have contrived its public miracles, or so much as the pretence of them, it required another reach of craft and new resources, to provide and adapt its prophecies to the same object. Further, it demanded not only a different art, but a totally opposite character, to conceive and promulgate its admirable morals. Again, the achievement of its propagation, in defiance of the powers and terrors of the world, implied a new energy of personal genius, and other qualities of action, than any concurring in the work before. Lastly, the model of the life of its Founder, in the very description of it, is a work of so much originality and wisdom, as could be the offspring only of consummate powers of invention; though to speak more fairly to the case, it seems, by an intuitive evidence, as if it could never have been even devised, but must have come from the life and reality of some perfect excellence of virtue, impossible to be taken from, or confounded with, the fictions of ingenuity. But the hypothesis sinks under its incredibility. For each of these suppositions of contrivance, being arbitrary, as it certainly is, and unsupported, the climax of them is an extravagance. And if the imbecility of art is foiled in the hypothesis, the combinations of accident are too vain to be thought of. The genuine state of the Christian evidence is this: There is unambiguous testimony to its works of miraculous power; there are oracles of prophecy; there are other distinct marks and signs of a Divine original within it. And no stock but that of truth could, in one subject, produce them all, or can now account for their existence.

The whole compass and system of the Christian Evidence unquestionably has nothing like it, nor approaching to it, in the annals of the world. It is a phenomenon standing alone. I assert this, on the concession of those who have exalted it, beside their intention, by the impotent comparisons through which they have sought to slander and traduce it. For what has been done? Its Miracles have been forced into a sort of parallel with some wild unauthenticated relations in the cloudy romance of a Pagan sophist (in the case of Apollonius Tyaneus); or with the vague and insulated pretences of a better history (in the case of Vespasian); or the mask of a detected and defeated imposture among a Roman Catholic sect. Its Prophecies have undergone the violence of a similar comparison with the oracles of Heathenism, long ago put to silence, or the legends of a more recent superstition. Its Divine morals have been represented as little better than might be derived from the philosophy of a Grecian or an Eastern teacher, Socrates or Confucius. Its wonderful progress and propagation, carried without any of the instruments of human power, and in opposition to them, have been matched with the success of the Mahometan heresy effected by the power of the sword. Thus all ages, and countries, and creeds, have been explored, with an industry greater than the success, to furnish the *separate materials* of such comparisons as the objectors have been able to produce: whilst the conspicuous and uncontested fact, that Christianity *unites within itself* the signs and indications which no other system, philosophic or religious, does, nor is pretended to do, leaves it in possession of a character which repels the indignity of all comparison, by the distant and incommensurate pretensions of the things attempted to be put in resemblance with it.

THE SITUATION

OF

THE WORLD AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S APPEARANCE.*

BY

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THE next Tract which I shall lay before the reader, is from the pen of the celebrated Principal ROBERTSON, one of the most eminent historical writers in the English language. It was originally preached as an Anniversary Sermon, before the *Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge.* It is the only discourse which Dr ROBERTSON ever published; and what is remarkable, it is his first production; published several years before he went to Edinburgh, and before any of the great historical works on which his fame rests. The nature of the subject being somewhat historical, gives scope for his peculiar powers. The style reminds us of one of the purest and most musical writers, of his own, or of any other age. The discourse has gone through various editions, and has, I believe, been translated into various foreign languages. It may be interesting to the reader to be informed, that the Society, before which it was preached, is a very important institution; and at that period was the only one in Scotland which laboured at once to diffuse Christian education in the Highlands and Islands, and to send the gospel to heathen lands. The number of its schools, at that date, was about one hundred and eighty. The number of children taught between six and seven thousand. It can now boast of double that number.

THERE is no employment more delightful to a devout mind, than the contemplation of the Divine wisdom in the government of this world. The civil history of mankind opens a wide field for this pious exercise. Careful observers may often, by the light of reason, form probable conjectures with regard to the plan of God's providence, and can discover a skilful hand directing the revolutions of human affairs, and compassing the best ends by the most effectual and surprising means: but sacred history, by drawing aside that veil which covers the councils of the Almighty, lays open his designs to the view of his creatures; and we can there trace the steps which he taketh towards accomplishing them, with more certainty, and greater pleasure. The facts which inspired writers relate, are no less instructive than the doctrines which they teach. The latter inform us, that God is powerful, and wise, and good; the former discover those perfections brought forth into action, and confirm speculative opinions, by real and striking examples.

The publication and establishment of Christianity in the world, is a remarkable event of this kind, and contributes greatly to illustrate, as well as to magnify the Divine power and wisdom. From beginnings the most inconsiderable, and by instruments the most unlikely, the Almighty, with incredible facility, raised that glorious fabric of his church, which hitherto hath withstood all the rage of his enemies; and "the gates of hell," we believe, "shall not prevail against it."* According to our Saviour's beautiful image, "the least of all seeds grew up, and waxed a great tree, and spread out its branches, and filled the earth."† The hand of God sheltered this feeble plant from the storm, and by his care it was reared, and cultivated, and brought to maturity. The wisdom and power of men united to oppose the doctrine of God: but it confounded the former, and overcame the latter. Neither the bigotry of the Jews, nor the superstition of the heathen, could resist its progress; and in vain "did Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and people of Israel, gather themselves together against the Lord and his Anointed."*

Many circumstances concurred in procuring for Christianity such a favourable reception and firm establishment in the world. Whoever reflects upon the situation of mankind at the time when it was published, will find abundant reason to admire the Divine wisdom, which disposed these circumstances with so much art, and improved them with such skill and success. The text naturally leads me to consider the conduct and administration of Providence in this particular light: "The word of God," saith the apostle, "the mystery hid from ages, and from generations, is now made manifest to his saints." Why was the gospel of Christ so long concealed from the world? Why was it published at that time? What do we find in that particular juncture to render the discovery of the Christian religion more necessary, or the propagation of it more successful?

In the following discourse, I shall endeavour to account for this part of the Divine economy, by selecting some remarkable circumstances, in the situation of mankind, which prove, that God "manifested the mystery of the gospel" at a time when the world stood most in need of such a revelation, and was best prepared for receiving it.

The appearance of Christ in so late an age, was an objection raised by his ancient adversaries, against the truth of his mission; and modern infidels have not failed to revive and to urge it, with their usual confidence and triumph. But if we can establish the truth of our general proposition, this cavil falls to the ground, and the Divine conduct is fully vindicated.

* Matt. xvi. 18. † Mark iv. 32. * Acts iv. 27.

* Preached before the *Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge*, January 6th, 1750.

I. About the time of Christ's appearance, there prevailed a general opinion, that the Almighty would send forth some eminent messenger to communicate a more perfect discovery of his will to mankind. The Supreme Being conducts all his operations by general laws. It seems to be one among these, that no perfection of any kind can be attained of a sudden. The motion by which his works advance towards their final and complete state, is gradual and progressive. This holds with regard to all the productions in the natural, and all the changes in the moral world. The same principle appears to have regulated the dispensations of religion. The light of revelation was not poured in upon mankind all at once, and with its full splendour. The obscurity of the dawn went before the brightness of the noon-day. The will of God was at first made known by revelations, useful indeed, but dark and mysterious. To these succeeded others more clear and perfect. In proportion as the situation of the world made it necessary, the Almighty was pleased further to open and unfold his scheme. And men came by degrees to understand this progressive plan of Providence, and to conceive how systems temporary and incomplete might serve to introduce that concluding and perfect revelation which would "declare the whole council of God to man."*

The dignity of the person employed to publish this revelation, the virtues of his character, the glory of his kingdom, and the signs of his coming, were described by the ancient prophets with the utmost perspicuity. Guided by this "sure word of prophecy," the Jews of that age concluded the period, predetermined by God, to be then completed; and that the "fulness of time" being come, the promised Messiah would suddenly appear. Devout persons among them "waited day and night for the consolation of Israel;"† and the whole nation, groaning under the Roman yoke, and stimulated by the desire of liberty, or of vengeance, expected their deliverer with the most anxious impatience.

Nor were these expectations peculiar to the Jews. By their dispersions among so many nations, by their conversation with the learned men among the heathens, and by the translation of their inspired writings into a language almost universal, the principles of their religion were spread all over the East: and it became the common belief, that a prince would arise at that time in Judea, who should change the face of the world, and extend his empire from one end of the earth to the other.

In this "due time" did the wisdom of God send forth his Son; not to assume any strange character, or to claim any new and unknown dignity, but to fulfil "all that had been spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began."‡ While the eyes of men were employed in search of the promised Messiah; while they watched every sign that could indicate his coming, and observed every circumstance which could lead them to discover him; "while the earnest expectation of all creatures waited for the revelation of God;" at that happy and favourable juncture was "the mystery hid from ages" manifested to the world. No wonder the Jews should receive our Saviour, on his first appearance, not only without prejudice, but even with eagerness and applause;§ no wonder the Gentiles should "gather together unto him," who had so long been "the desire of all nations."‖

Had Christ been manifested at a more early period, the world would not have been prepared to meet him with the same fondness and zeal. Had his appearance been postponed for any considerable time, men's expectations would have begun to languish, and the warmth of desire, from a delay of gratification, might have cooled, and died away.

II. But it is not only from circumstances peculiar to the Jews, and neighbouring nations, that we conclude the Christian religion to have been published at the most proper time: we propose to bring a further confirmation of this truth, from a survey of the condition and circumstances of mankind in general. Let us venture then into this large field, and take a view of the political, of the moral, of the religious, and of the domestic state of the world.

We begin by considering the political state of the world, about the time of our Saviour's appearance. The world, in the most early ages, was divided into small independent states, differing from each other in language, manners, laws, and religion. The shock of so many opposite interests, the interfering of so many contrary views, occasioned the most violent convulsions and disorders. Perpetual discord subsisted between these rival states; hostility and bloodshed never ceased during that turbulent and restless period. Commerce had not hitherto united mankind, and opened the communication of one nation with another. The world may now be considered as one vast society, closely cemented by mutual wants; each part contributing its share towards the subsistence, the pleasure, and improvement of the whole. But in those more simple ages, the intercourse between nations was extremely inconsiderable. Voyages into remote countries, in quest either of wealth or of knowledge, were very rare. Men moved in a narrow circle, little acquainted with any thing beyond the limits of their own small territory, and utter strangers to the condition and character of distant nations.

At last the Roman ambition undertook the arduous enterprise of conquering the world, and conducted it with such refined policy, irresistible courage, and inimitable perseverance, as, in the end, crowned the attempt with success. "They trode down the kingdoms," according to Daniel's prophetic description, "and by their exceeding strength, they devoured the whole earth."* However, by enslaving the world, they civilized it; and while they oppressed mankind, they united them together. The same laws were every where established, and the same languages understood. Men approached nearer to one another in sentiments and in manners. The intercourse between the most distant corners of the earth was rendered secure and agreeable. Satiated with victory, the first emperors abandoned all thoughts of new conquests. Peace, an unknown blessing, was enjoyed throughout all that vast empire; or, if a slight war was waged on an outlying and barbarous frontier, far from disturbing the tranquillity, it scarcely drew the attention of mankind.†

Such was the political state of the world when Christianity made its first appearance; and, from this representation of it, many circumstances occur to justify the Divine wisdom, in choosing that particular conjuncture, for publishing it. During the period, which I first described, the propagation of any new religion must have been extremely slow and uncertain. How could it have forced its way through innumerable difficulties, arising from the unsettled state of the

* Acts xx. 27. † Luke ii. 25, 38. ‡ Acts iii. 21.

§ This statement needs to be taken with qualification. On some occasions it is declared, that "the common people heard him gladly;" but, from the very outset, he met with keen opposition. His outward appearance seemed inconsistent with his claims; and the moment his true character came to be known, the Jews could not endure him.—EDITOR.

‖ Gen. xlix. 18; Hag. ii. 7.

* Dan. vii. 7, 23.

† A remarkable proof of the peace which then reigned in the world, is to be found in the fact, that the temple of Janus was then shut. This was a public emblem of peace, and had not occurred for 700 years before.—EDITOR

world, from the fierceness and animosity of hostile and divided nations? The power of God, no doubt, could have surmounted all these obstacles: but it is observable, that this power is never exerted but on the most necessary occasions. The Almighty seldom effects, by supernatural means, any thing which could have been accomplished by such as are natural. And, were we to judge by maxims merely human, the propagation of Christianity, in those circumstances, would have proved not only a dangerous, but an impossible enterprise.

But, favoured by the union and tranquillity of the Roman empire, the disciples of Christ executed their commission to great advantage. The success and rapidity with which they diffused the knowledge of his name over the world, are astonishing. This epistle to the Colossians was written about thirty years after our Saviour's ascension; and, even then, the apostle could assert, that the gospel had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven,"* *i. e.* through the whole extent of the Roman empire. Nations were then accessible, which formerly had been unknown. Under this situation, into which the providence of God had brought the world, the "joyful sound" in a few years, reached those remote corners of the earth, into which it could not, otherwise, have penetrated for many ages.†

This view of our subject presents to us an idea of the Christian religion, equal to the greatest and most magnificent conception of the human mind. The noblest people, that ever entered upon the stage of the world, appear to have been only instruments in the Divine hand, for the execution of wise purposes concealed from themselves. The Roman ambition and bravery paved the way, and prepared the world for the reception of the Christian doctrine: they fought and conquered, that it might triumph with the greater ease. "Howbeit, they meaned not so, neither did their heart think so; but it was in their heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few."‡ By means of their victories, the over-ruling wisdom of God established an empire, that really possesses the perpetuity and eternal duration, which they vainly arrogated to their own: He erected "a throne which shall continue for ever;"§ and "of the increase of that government there shall be no end."‖

III. Let us consider the state of the world with regard to morals. We cannot expect to find pure and undefiled virtue among those people who were destitute of the instructions, the promises and assistance of Divine revelation. Unenlightened reason often errs: undirected virtue frequently deviates from the right path. But, even in those less favoured ages, righteousness had not altogether "perished from the earth; and the nations which had not the law, did by nature the things contained in the law."¶ Those virtuous but feeble efforts of the human mind, were encouraged and seconded by several happy circumstances in the situation of the world, owing in appearance to the sagacity of men, but ordained in reality by the wisdom of God. One of these was of a singular nature, and well deserves our particular attention.

We have already mentioned the early division of the world into small independent states. These states, unbroken by the refinements of luxury, and animated with the noblest of human passions, struggled for liberty and obtained it. Lawgivers, intimately acquainted with human nature, deep politicians, and lovers of mankind, arose in different places, and founded those equal and happy governments, which have been the admiration and envy of all succeeding ages. Temperance, frugality, decency, public spirit, love to their fellow-citizens, magnanimity, were the virtues which flourished under such wise institutions. At the same time, in those small commonwealths, the conduct of every citizen was subjected to the eye of the magistrate, and the nature of the government obliged him to inspect their manners with severity. The smallest crimes could not escape observation: Even dangerous virtues were exposed to censure. On this foundation of public liberty, did ancient virtue rest; an effect of government little known in modern times, wherein the views of legislators are confined to inferior objects. But from this source were derived all those splendid actions among the heathens, which, on the one hand, have been so invidiously displayed by infidels, as a reproach to our holy religion, and, on the other, so justly celebrated by Christians, in order to rouse the zeal and emulation of a degenerate age.*

Virtue, however, did not long enjoy this temporary and precarious support. Those wise institutions were the works of men, and, like their authors subject to decay. Some of them perished by the malignity of internal diseases: and, if a vigorous constitution, or more skilful management, prolonged the period of others, they yielded at last to the violence of external injuries. It was impossible either to divert or resist the torrent of Roman power: It gathered strength from opposition, and bore down all nations before it. But, by subduing the world, the Romans lost their own liberty. Many causes, which it is not our present business to explain, concurred in producing this effect: Many vices, engendered or nourished by prosperity, delivered them over to the vilest race of tyrants that ever afflicted or disgraced human nature.

The alliance between morals and government was now broken; an influence hitherto so friendly to virtue, became altogether malignant, and was exerted, with most fatal effect, to poison and debase the human mind. Together with despotic power, entered all those odious vices, which are usually found in its train: and in a short time, they grew to an incredible pitch. The colours are not too strong, which the apostle employs in drawing the character of that age. Contem-

* Col. i. 23.

† One cannot help thinking, that all the amazing facilities of communication with the most remote parts of the world, which are opening up at the present day, are designed for a similar purpose. We cannot believe, that so much talent, and enterprise, and wealth, are all expended merely for promoting the interests of a perishable commerce. It is more natural to believe, that the connexion of Great Britain with India, and Australasia, and Africa, and the growing facilities of intercourse with so many other parts of the world, are intended to carry the gospel into the heart of the vast regions of the East, and generally to promote its propagation over the earth.—Editor.

‡ Isa. x. 7. § Heb. i. 8. ‖ Isa. ix. 7.

¶ Rom. ii. 14.

* This picture of the high moral character of the ancient republics, is greatly overdrawn; but it was a current error of the literary men of Dr Robertson's time. That these republics were free from many of the gross vices of a more luxurious or despotic age, is probable enough; but they were far indeed from being either religious or moral, in the right sense of the terms. The apostle Paul, in his awful account of the heathen world, in the 1st chapter of Romans, makes no exception on behalf of the ancient republics either of Greece or Rome; and the more minute and accurate investigations of recent historians have not lightened but darkened the picture. If men were as good and virtuous, without revelation, as the writer represents, the argument for the necessity of Christianity would seriously be lessened. Heathenism would deserve no small praise; but I beg to remind the reader, that, in these much applauded republics, the most intolerable slavery prevailed. In the small state of Attica alone, there were not less than 400,000 slaves. In Athens, where they were better treated than in many other quarters, 20,000 deserted during a single war; so intolerable did they feel the oppression. In Sparta, 2000 poor slaves were murdered in cold blood. The youth were taught expertness by surprising and killing slaves. The Roman writers are full of accounts of the most wanton cruelty, practised upon slaves. Indeed, slaves do not seem to have been treated as human beings. It may be added, the vice of slavery always indicates and draws along with it, a crowd of other evils. Were it necessary to enlarge the proof of crime, one might refer to shameful cruelties in war—fearful conjugal infidelity in Athens, where, at one time, 5000 of the citizens were illegitimate—Ostracism, or the exile, perhaps death, of the man who had distinguished himself for his public virtues—the destruction, by law, of weak or deformed children, among the republicans of Sparta—and many others.—Editor.

porary historians justify him, when he describes it "to be alienated from the life of God, walking in vanity through blindness of mind; to be past feeling, given up to lasciviousness, and to work all uncleanness with greediness."*

In this time of universal corruption, did the wisdom of God manifest the Christian revelation to the world, not to re-establish virtue upon the same insecure foundation of civil government, but to erect it upon the eternal and immoveable basis of a religion, which teacheth righteousness by the authority of God. What the wisdom of men could do for the encouragement of virtue in a corrupt world, had been tried during several ages; and all human devices were found, by experience, to be of very small avail: so that no juncture could be more proper for publishing a religion, which, independent on human laws and institutions, explains the principles of morals with admirable perspicuity, and enforces the practice of them by most persuasive arguments. Had not Christianity appeared to check and to mitigate the pernicious effects of despotic unlimited empire, it is hard to say how far they might have gone towards extinguishing the name and exercise of virtue among men. This we know, that, in a most dissolute age, and under the worst government, the primitive Christians attained to an eminence in every virtue, of which there is no example in the history of mankind. The spirit of their religion, superior to the corrupt genius of the age, continued pure and vigorous; and men saw with admiration, that, when every other foundation of virtue was overthrown, "the foundation of God stood sure," immoveable amidst "the floods which came, the rains that descended, and the winds that blew and beat upon it."†

IV. Let us consider the world with regard to its religious state. The national character of the Jews seems to have been deeply tinctured with superstition. Their early education in Egypt, the example of neighbouring nations, the influence of the climate, but, above all, the perverseness of their own disposition, rendered this impression indelible. Obstinate against all the endeavours employed by the Divine Lawgiver to repress or to extirpate it, this superstitious spirit broke out on every occasion. Delighted with the ceremonial prescriptions of the law, the Jews utterly neglected the moral: and, fond of such rites as please the imagination, they undervalued those duties which improve the heart. This unhappy bias was greatly increased by the doctrine of the Pharisees, which reduced the prejudices of their countrymen into a regular system of superstition. By their vain traditions, they added to the load of ceremonies: by their wretched interpretations of the law, they abridged the number of moral precepts. They openly preferred the former before the latter; and substituted observances frivolous and insignificant, in the place of "the weighty matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith."‡

While the Pharisees undermined religion on one hand, their rivals the Saducees carried on a more bold and impious attack against it, from another quarter. By denying the immortality of the soul, they wounded religion in a vital part; and overturned the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, which hath been, and must ever be, the chief foundation of virtuous obedience. The practice of these two contending sects, was perfectly suitable to their principles. The followers of the one were scandalous libertines; the disciples of the other, notorious hypocrites: and, between them, the knowledge as well as power of true religion were entirely destroyed. It was high time then for the wisdom of God to vindicate his injured law, and to revive languishing and decayed religion among his ancient people. To recall the Jews from their former wanderings, the Almighty had with success employed the ministry of his holy prophets: but the malignant distempers of that age would not have yielded to any common remedy: a conceited and perverse generation would have listened to no inferior messenger: and therefore, the great prophet was sent forth in this due time, to explain, to extend, and to perfect the law, "and to fill Zion with judgment and righteousness."§†

But the deplorable situation of the heathen world with regard to religion, called still more loudly for an immediate interposition of the Divine hand. I shall not mention the characters of the heathen deities, infamous for the most enormous crimes; nor describe their religious worship, consisting frequently in the vilest and most shameful rites. Certain it is, the more any man honoured such gods, the worse he himself was; and the oftener he served them, the more wicked he would become.

The spirit and genius of heathenism, according to the apostle's observation, were "in all things too much superstitious."‡ Stately temples, expensive sacrifices, pompous ceremonies, magnificent festivals, with all the other circumstances of show and splendour, were the objects which false religion presented to its votaries: but just notions of God, obedience to his moral laws, purity of heart, and sanctity of life, were not once mentioned as ingredients in religious service. Superstition never prevailed among any people, but at the expense of morals. The heathen superstition, far from giving any aid to virtue, seems not to have had the least connection with it. No repentance of past crimes, no future amendment of conduct, are ever prescribed by it, as proper means of appeasing their offended deities. "Sacrifice a chosen victim; bow down before an hallowed image; be initiated in the sacred mysteries; and the wrath of the gods shall be averted, and the thunder shall drop from their hands." Suitable to these sentiments, is the behaviour of Balak king of Moab, described by the prophet Micah. That prince had provoked the God of Israel; and, in order to regain his favour, thought of the same means, which superstition employs to mitigate the rage of its false gods. "Wherewith," says he, "shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?§—To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God," were acceptible services, which made no part in the system of heathen religion.

Happily, the wisdom and simplicity of ancient government checked the progress of this infectious principle, and corrected, in some degree, its poisonous and destructive qualities. But no sooner had the tyranny of the Roman emperors removed this restraint, by subverting liberty, than superstition made its advances on the world by sudden and mighty steps, and exercised an uncontrolled dominion in every corner of the earth. Tyranny and superstition, like those other destroyers of mankind, famine and pestilence, are nearly allied. Superstition breaks the spirit, and prepares it for servitude. Tyranny, for this reason, encourages superstition, and employs it as an useful auxiliary to illegal power. Accordingly, Rome adopted the gods

* Eph. iv. 17—19. † Matt. viii. 25. ‡ Matt. xxiii. 23

* Isaiah xxxiii. 5.

† Of course the writer does not mean, in this statement, to exclude the priestly office and character of Messiah. Important as is the prophetical, the atoning and the priestly is not less indispensable. Without the latter, comparatively speaking, the coming of Christ would have been vain.—EDITOR.

‡ Acts xvii. 23. § Micah vi. 6—8.

of almost every nation whom she had conquered; and opened her temples to the grossest superstitions of the most barbarous people. Her "foolish heart being darkened, she changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."* †

At this time, therefore, did a good God, in pity to his deluded creatures, publish the Christian revelation. By it, the God of truth was made known; "and the idols of the nations were moved at his presence."‡ Rational and sublime in its doctrines, humane and beneficent in its precepts, pure and simple in its worship; Christianity was better calculated than any other religion, to repress the inroads of superstition, and to establish an acceptable and manly devotion, consisting "in spirit and in truth."§ No period can be mentioned, when instruction in these important articles would have been more seasonable or necessary. The absurd fictions, and abominable practices of superstition, had gone near to extinguish the natural sentiments of the human mind, concerning the Supreme Being, and to banish his name and worship from the earth. No wonder, men, under these circumstances, should listen with joy to the Christian revelation, which delivered them from that hateful yoke, and taught them "to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him."‖ ¶

V. Let us consider the world with regard to its domestic situation; a view, perhaps, less extensive and magnificent than those which hitherto have engaged our attention, but not less important. The private and domestic situation of mankind is the chief circumstance which forms their character, and becomes the great source of their happiness or misery. Any poison in this fountain, communicates itself to the manners of men; any bitterness there, infects all the pleasures of life. Many circumstances, of the most fatal influence on domestic virtue and happiness, occur to attentive observers of the period under review.

Domestic society is founded in the union between husband and wife. Among all civilized nations this union hath been esteemed sacred and honourable; and from it are derived those exquisite joys or sorrows, which can embitter all the pleasures, or alleviate all the pains in human life. In the ancient world, there prevailed two practices, equally pernicious to the peace and happiness of the married state. From the most early times, polygamy seems to have been universal among the Eastern nations; and men married as many wives as their fancy wished for, or their fortune could maintain. Now, this practice not only appears to be contrary to the intention of the Almighty, who at first created but one person of each sex, and hath since preserved an admirable proportion between the number of males and females whom he sends into the world; but by it likewise were banished from domestic life all those enjoyments which sweeten and endear it. Friendship, social intercourse, confidence, and the mutual care of children, were in a great measure unknown. On the one hand, rigour, voluptuousness, jealousy; on the other, subjection without love, fidelity, or virtue. One half of the human species became the property of the other; and the husband, instead of being the friend and protector of a wife, was no better than the master and tyrant over a slave. The envy and discord which were introduced into the families of Jacob and Elkanah by a plurality of wives, are but imperfect pictures of the enormities occasioned by the same practice under masters less virtuous, and in ages more dissolute and luxurious. Wherever the Christian religion is established, an end hath been put to an institution so inconsistent with the felicity of domestic life. Marriage, suitable to the ordinance of God, is rendered a friendly and indissoluble alliance between two persons; and tranquillity, confidence, and joy, bless an union begun and cemented by mutual love.

In the western parts of the world, the maxims with regard to marriage were more conformable to nature. One man was confined to one woman; but, at the same time, their laws allowed a practice which introduced the most fatal disorders into domestic life. The Almighty, "because of the hardness of their hearts," permitted the Jews, on certain occasions, "to give a writing of divorcement to their wives."* According to their usual custom, the Jews stretched this indulgence to most extravagant lengths; and, defining the cases in which they pretended divorces to be lawful with a minute and over-curious nicety, they altogether perverted the institution of God. Their doctors permitted divorces for causes so trivial and ridiculous, as cannot be mentioned in a grave discourse. The utmost dissolution of manners was the effect of such licentious opinions; and our Saviour found the abuses to be grown so enormous, as to render the strictest and most precise limitations of the Mosaic precepts absolutely necessary.

Nor was this matter on any better footing among the heathen nations. Divorces, on very slight pretences, were permitted both by the Greek and Roman legislators. And though the pure manners of those republics, restrained, for some time, the operation of such a pernicious institution; though the virtue of private persons seldom abused the indulgence which the laws allowed them: yet no sooner had the progress of luxury, and the establishment of despotic power, vitiated the taste of men, than the law with regard to divorces was found to be among the worst corruptions which prevailed in that abandoned age. The facility of separation rendered married persons careless of obtaining or practising those virtues which render domestic life tranquil and delightful. The education of children was neglected by parents, who often met together with a scheme of separation in both their thoughts. Marriage, instead of restraining, added to the violence of irregular desire; and, under a legal name, became the vilest and most shameless prostitution. From all these causes, the married state fell into disreputation and contempt; and it became necessary to force men, by penal laws, into a society where they expected no secure or lasting happiness. Among the Romans, domestic corruption grew, of a sudden, to an incredible height; and perhaps, in the history of mankind, we can find no parallel to the undisguised impurity and licentiousness of that age.† It was in a good time, therefore, that our Saviour abolished a practice which had been one of the most fertile sources of those disorders. The bonds of the marriage union were rendered by him almost indissoluble; and the "cords of love," were drawn as close as possible. Political projectors may please themselves

* Rom. i. 21, 23.

† The eminent author seems here to overrate the influence of simple forms of ancient government, as guards against superstition. Where men are not blessed with the light of revelation, they become the slaves of superstition, whatever may be the form of their political government, whether simple or complex. In many countries of the world, where the forms of government are simple, the superstition is most gross and abominable. The countries of savages are a proof of this. Rome, doubtless, adopted the gods of all the nations of the earth, as a matter of policy, to please all parties, like the advocates of modern liberalism; but this proceeded, in the first instance, from her ignorance of Divine truth, and hatred to it. She did not receive Christianity into her favour. She persecuted its disciples with merciless cruelty.—EDITOR.

‡ Isa. xix. 1. § John iv. 24. ‖ Luke i. 74.

¶ The statement, that men listened with joy to the Christian revelation, as a deliverance from the yoke of superstition, is only true to a certain extent. No doubt, those who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, received the gospel, rejoiced in their deliverance; but the great body of men, so far from gladly embracing the Christian revelation, hated and persecuted it for its holiness.—EDITOR.

* Mark x. 4, 5. † Rom. i. 26, &c.

with imaginary advantages resulting from the liberty of divorces; but reason, as well as the experience of mankind, justify the wisdom of the Divine decree concerning them. If the manners of men be not extremely pure and simple, the least indulgence in this article hath always proved fatal to the peace and virtue of domestic life; and whatever remains of these we now find in a dissolute age, must be entirely ascribed to that regulation in the gospel,* which superficial reasoners represent as a grievance, though it be in truth the greatest blessing to mankind.†

If the lives of those who are at the head of domestic society needed reformation, the sufferings of those who were subject to them merited relief.

So many are the wants of human society, that far the greater part of mankind is condemned to constant toil and labour in order to supply them. In the ancient world, the condition of this numerous and useful race of men, differed widely from that wherein they are now placed. They were not freemen, but slaves, who occupied the inferior, though necessary, station in human life. Their labour was not a voluntary duty to the society, which entitled them to a reward; it was an hard task, imposed without their consent, and exacted with the utmost rigour. The number of persons reduced to this unhappy condition, was immense. In those parts of the world whose history and situation are best known, above two-thirds of the whole inhabitants are computed to have been in a state of slavery. The persons, the goods, the children of these slaves, were the property of their masters, disposed of at pleasure, and transferred, like any other possession, from one hand to another. No inequality of condition, no superiority in power, no pretext of consent, can justify this ignominious depression of human nature, or can confer upon one man the right of dominion over the person of another. But not only doth reason condemn this institution as unjust; experience proved it to be pernicious both to masters and slaves. The elevation of the former inspired them with pride, insolence, impatience, cruelty, and voluptuousness: the dependent and hopeless state of the latter, dejected the human mind, and extinguished every generous and noble principle in the heart. Were I to mention the laws and regulations of the most civilized states among the ancients, concerning those unfortunate sufferers; were I to relate the treatment which they met with from persons most renowned for their virtue; maxims so inhuman, and actions so barbarous, would excite the strongest pity and indignation, in an age which never beheld the tyranny of the oppressor, nor heard the groans of the captive.‡

It is true, while men enjoyed those wise institutions of government which we formerly described, the state of servitude did not become altogether intolerable; many expedients were used for mitigating the rigour of command, and lightening the yoke of obedience; but upon establishing despotic government in the Roman empire, domestic tyranny rose, in a short time, to an astonishing height. In that rank soil, every vice which power nourishes in the great, or oppression engenders in the mean, thrived and grew up apace.

Here then is an object worthy the attention of that merciful God, "who delivereth the soul of the afflicted from violence, who heareth the cry of the needy, and him who hath no helper."* The groans of such an innumerable multitude of his reasonable creatures, bereaved of the noblest privilege of their nature, liberty and independence, would not, we may believe, be uttered in vain. He could not always "keep silence, and be still," when he beheld their wretched situation, so destructive of happiness, and so fatal to virtue. At last the Divine wisdom interposed; and when the evil had become intolerable, and seemed to be past cure, the promulgation of Christianity brought an effectual and timely remedy.

It is not the authority of any single detached precept in the gospel, but the spirit and genius of the Christian religion, more powerful than any particular command, which hath abolished the practice of slavery through the world. The temper which Christianity inspired, was mild and gentle; and the doctrines it taught, added such dignity and lustre to human nature, as rescued it from the dishonourable servitude into which it was sunk. All men, of every condition, are declared to be the offspring of the same God, and the heirs of the same heavenly inheritance.† Our Saviour redeemed them from iniquity by his death, and one Spirit worketh powerfully in their hearts. Wherever such opinions prevail, no human creature can be regarded as altogether insignificant and vile: even the meanest acquire dignity; exterior distinctions disappear; and men approach nearer to that original equality in which they were at first placed, and are still viewed by their impartial Creator.

What a wonderful and blessed change hath Christianity produced in the face of the world? Together with the knowledge of it, liberty, humanity, and domestic happiness, diffused themselves over every corner of the earth. It is deemed a virtue, to admire and to praise those illustrious personages who delivered mankind from the rage of tyrants, and vindicated the violated laws and constitution of their country. And is no admiration due to the generous spirit of that religion which restored liberty, not to one nation or society alone, but rescued from the worst servitude far the greater number of the human race, and acquired for them that happy freedom which they still enjoy?‡ When we behold Christianity making its progress through the world, and working every where such an important alteration in the condition of mankind, we may well apply to a temporal deliverance what the prophet spoke concerning a spiritual salvation:

* Matt. v. 32.

† It might have been added, that the moral restraint which the gospel imposes, is a striking proof of its Divine origin. Nothing like it is to be met with in any of the religions of men, especially those which originated in the East.—EDITOR.

‡ Even in the time of Justinian, one of the Christian emperors of Rome, after the influence of Christianity had made considerable progress, the *law* upon the condition of slaves ran in these words:—"Slaves are in the power of their masters, which power is founded in the law of nations; for *among all nations alike*, we may observe, that masters have the power of life and death over their slaves, and whatever the slave gets belongs to the master." Another part of the same code is in these words:—"No law has reference to the slave." In other words, slavcs are beyond the protection of any law, and what then must have been their condition with such ignorant, selfish, ungodly masters as those who ruled over them? We have already shown, in a former note, that the exception which the writer, in the next paragraph, makes in behalf of the mild treatment of the slaves of the ancient republics, is greatly exaggeratcd.—EDITOR.

* Ps. lxxii. 12.

† Christianity does not say that all men are the heirs of the same heavenly inheritance. This is a loose and injurious mode of speech. The gospel offers salvation to all men, Jew and Gentile alike, but we are assured that some only will actually participate in the blessing.—EDITOR.

‡ The permission of slavery in our American colonies, is a specious, not a real objection against the reasoning under this head. The genius and tendency of any religion are known by the operation of its vigorous, not of its declining age; and if, in a degenerate world, a service hath survived an institution which Christianity had utterly abolished, this, like many other vices which prevail among Christians, must be charged upon the corruption of the human heart, not upon that religion which testifies against it.*

* The sentiment of this note is just and good. Happily, since the day of Principal Robertson, slavery has been abolished in the British dominions; and, it may be safely said, in a chief degree, through the exertion of Christians. Some men may have lent their influence from political or party motive, but Christianity has had the largest share in the victory. Mr Wilberforce, and others, who first set the movement on foot, and who maintained it for so many years, was an eminent Christian, and acted in the question from Christian motives; and it is the Christian men and churches of the United States of America, who seem destined, in the Providence of God, to abolish the wide-spread and abominable slavery of that great republic.—EDITOR.

'Behold, the acceptable year of the Lord is come! Liberty is proclaimed to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. They shall rest from their sorrow, and from their fear, and from the hard bondage wherein they were made to serve."*

The abolition of domestic slavery was the occasion of another change in the manners of men, which is no less remarkable. Captives taken in war, were, in all probability, the first persons subjected to perpetual servitude; and when the necessities or luxury of mankind increased the demand for slaves, every new war recruited their number, by reducing the vanquished to that wretched condition. Hence proceeded the fierce and desperate spirit with which wars were carried on among ancient nations. While chains and slavery were the certain lot of the conquered, battles were fought and towns defended, with rage and obstinacy, which nothing but horror at such a fate could have inspired; but, by putting an end to the cruel institution of slavery, Christianity extended its mild influence to the practice of war; and that barbarous art, softened by its humane spirit, ceased to be so destructive. Secure, in every event, of personal liberty, the vanquished resisted with less obstinacy, and the triumph of the victor became less cruel. Thus, humanity was introduced into the exercise of war, with which it appears to be almost incompatible; and it is to the merciful maxims of Christianity, much more than to any other cause, that we must ascribe the little ferocity and bloodshed which accompany modern victories. Even where the passions of men are fiercest, and most highly inflamed, the powerful genius of our religion interposes, restrains the fury of war, and sets bounds to its destroying rage. The benevolent spirit of the gospel delivereth the captive from his fetters, "looseth those who were appointed to death;"† "and saith to the sword that is ready to devour, Return to thy scabbard, and be still."‡

It hath become a fashionable topic among political reasoners, to celebrate the mildness and humanity of modern manners, and to prefer the character of present times, in that respect, before the ancient. To what cause shall we ascribe this important revolution in the sentiments and dispositions of mankind? Not to the influence of better instituted governments; for in legislative wisdom the ancients far excelled us; not to the effects of a better directed education; that duty, shamefully neglected by us, was, among them, an object of chief attention; nor to our superior refinements in elegant and polite arts; there we must be content to equal, without pretending to surpass the ancients.* The Christian religion, "hid from ages, but now manifested to the world," is the only cause capable of producing so great an effect: "That wisdom which is from above, is pure and peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy."† Genuine Christianity is distinguished above all other religions by the mildness of its spirit; the enemy of every practice which hardens the heart; the encourager of every virtue which renders the character humane. Wherever it hath been established in purity, and practised with zeal, "kindness, long-suffering, meekness, charity,"‡ are the graces which accompany it. Even the vices and inventions of men, which have mingled themselves with the truths of God, have not been able entirely to destroy their effects. Under all disadvantages, the genius of the gospel exerts itself, civilizing the fiercest and most barbarous nations, and inspiring a gentleness of disposition, unknown to any other religion. Together with the best spiritual blessings, the most valuable temporal mercies have been communicated to the world by Christianity. It not only sanctifies our souls, but refines our manners; and while it gives the promises of the next life, it improves and adorns the present. That happy change which the wisdom of man could not effect, God in his good time accomplished, by "manifesting to the world the mystery hid from ages and generations."§

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* Here the writer seems again to allow his love of classical antiquity to blind him to the attainments of modern times. There can be little question that many of the legislative enactments of the ancient governments betoken great wisdom; but it seems very questionable whether they are entitled to the praise of having a better directed education; this were saying little for our Christianity; and in point of fact, it will be difficult to produce from antiquity the case of any nation, which, in point of intellectual and moral worth, can be compared with Scotland in the middle of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, under a widely diffused system of literary and Christian education. The ancient governments may have made a small class of individuals great proficients in certain accomplishments, but it was Christianity, which was the first to aim at the universal improvement of a nation, by educating the whole body of the people.—EDITOR.

† James iii. 17. ‡ Col. iii. 12.

§ The wonderful moral revolution which has taken place in a number of the islands of the South Seas, and the interesting fact, that, in the island of Antigua, thirty thousand slaves were safely emancipated in 1834, in a moment, without any of that preparation which was adopted in other islands, are striking testimonies to the power of the gospel. In both cases, the result was owing to the influence of a widely-spread and living Christianity.—EDITOR.

* Isa. lxi. 1; xiv. 3. † Ps. cii. 20. ‡ Jer. xlvii. 7.

[IN the preceding Tract, the writer has well shown the peculiar fitness of the coming of Christ, to the circumstances of the world, at the time in which he appeared; that he did not come at random, or arbitrarily, but at the most appropriate season; and that this is an argument for the Divine truth of Christianity. But in addition to these views, various considerations might be suggested, still farther illustrative of the subject. It is often asked, Why was Christianity so late of being introduced to the world? One reason might be to give ample scope for the depravity of man to display itself. It is on this very depravity that the gospel proceeds as a first principle. Another reason might be to show forth the weakness of human wisdom, the utter inability of man to heal himself, and therefore the necessity of a Divine interposition. A third reason might be to afford opportunities for the development of the argument from prophecy, and so the better to establish the Evidences of Revelation. A farther reason might be to afford the world time to be full of people, that Messiah might have a more glorious triumph for his kingdom, in their rapid conversion.—EDITOR.]

A SHORT AND EASY METHOD WITH THE DEISTS.

BY THE

Rev. CHARLES LESLIE, M.A.

The Rev. Charles Leslie, M.A., the celebrated author of the following Tract, was the son of an Irish Bishop, and was himself appointed to a charge in Ireland, during the trying period of 1687, when Popery was fast gaining the ascendancy in Great Britain. He was a determined Protestant, and held repeated public discussions with Papists. He published nearly thirty different tracts and pamphlets, chiefly controversial. Indeed, so highly was he reputed as a polemic, that he was sent over to the Continent by some gentlemen of England, to endeavour to convert the son of James II. to the Protestant faith, an undertaking, however, in which he failed. The most celebrated of his works is his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*. The following interesting account of the origin of the publication is taken from the preface to the edition published by the Rev. Mr Jones of Nayland. It need scarcely be added, that the work has gone through a great variety of editions, though still it is far from being so generally known or possessed, as its value justly claims.

"Every reader, to whom the *Short Method* is new, will be induced to think more highly of it, if I tell him its history; as I received it from Dr Delany, Dean of Down, in Ireland; who told me he had it from Captain Leslie, a son of the author. It was the fortune of Mr Leslie to be acquainted with the Duke of Leeds of that time; who observed to him, that although he was a believer of the Christian religion, he was not satisfied with the common methods of proving it; that the argument was long and complicated; so that some had neither leisure nor patience to follow it, and others were not able to comprehend it; that as it was the nature of all truth to be plain and simple, if Christianity were a truth, there must be some short way of showing it to be so; and he wished Mr Leslie would think of it. Such a hint to such a man, in the space of three days, produced a rough draught of the *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*; which he presented to the Duke, who looked it over, and then said, 'I thought I was a Christian before, but I am sure of it now; and as I am indebted to you for converting me, I shall henceforth look upon you as my spiritual father.' And he acted accordingly; for he never came into his company afterwards, without asking his blessing. Such is the story; very nearly as Dr Delany himself would tell it, if he were now alive. The circumstances are so memorable, that there must have been something very extraordinary at the bottom to account for them. And so thought Dr Middleton; though the work affected him in a very different manner. Feeling how necessary it was to his principles that he should some way rid himself of Mr Leslie's argument, he looked out for some false fact, to which the four marks might be applied, and this he did for twenty years together, without being able to find one. This I learned from the late Dr Berkeley, son to the celebrated Bishop of Cloyne, who conversed much with the world, and I believe would not have reported such a thing, but upon good authority.

"To those who take Mr Leslie's tracts into their hands, I have only this short advice to give. I beseech them to remember, that if Christianity be true, it is tremendously true. All the great things this world can show are as nothing in comparison of it. Heaven and hell are the issue. Its facts yet to come are as certain as those that are past. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised; the heavens shall be on fire, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the angels shall gather the elect of God from the four winds; all men shall be called upon to give an account of their words and actions; and they who now deny Jesus Christ, and hold him in defiance, shall see the heaven and earth fly away before his face. A man must be stupified if he can think on these things, without fleeing from the wrath to come; and there is no way but in the belief of Christianity, which this book teaches."

SIR,

I. In answer to yours of the 3d instant, I much condole with you in your unhappy circumstances, of being placed amongst such company, where, as you say, you continually hear the sacred Scriptures, and the histories therein contained, particularly of Moses and of Christ, and all revealed religion, turned into ridicule, by men who set up for sense and reason. And they say that there is no greater ground to believe in Christ, than in Mahomet; that all these pretences to revelation are cheats, and ever have been among Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians; that they are all alike impositions of cunning and designing men, upon the credulity, at first, of simple and unthinking people, till, their numbers increasing, their delusions grew popular, came at last to be established by laws; and then the force of education and custom gives a bias to the judgments of after ages, till such deceits come really to be believed, being received upon trust from the ages foregoing, without examining into the original and bottom of them. Which these, our modern men of sense (as they desire to be esteemed), say that they only do, that they only have their judgments freed from the slavish authority of precedents

and laws, in matters of truth, which, they say, ought only to be decided by reason; though by a prudent compliance with popularity and laws, they preserve themselves from outrage, and legal penalties; for none of their complexion are addicted to sufferings or martyrdom.

Now, Sir, that which you desire from me, is some short topic of reason, if such can be found, whereby, without running to authorities, and the intricate mazes of learning, which breed long disputes, and which these men of reason deny by wholesale, though they can give no reason for it, only suppose that authors have been trumped upon us, interpolated and corrupted, so that no stress can be laid upon them, though it cannot be shown wherein they are so corrupted; which, in reason, ought to lie upon them to prove, who allege it; otherwise it is not only a precarious, but a guilty plea: and the more, that they refrain not to quote books on their side, for whose authority there are no better, or not so good grounds. However, you say, it makes your disputes endless, and they go away with noise and clamour, and a boast, that there is nothing, at least nothing certain, to be said on the Christian side. Therefore you are desirous to find some one topic of reason, which should demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion, and at the same time, distinguish it from the impostures of Mahomet, and the old Pagan world: that our Deists may be brought to this test, and be obliged either to renounce their reason, and the common reason of mankind, or to submit to the clear proof, from reason, of the Christian religion; which must be such a proof, as no imposture can pretend to, otherwise it cannot prove the Christian religion not to be an imposture. And, whether such a proof, one single proof (to avoid confusion) is not to be found out, you desire to know from me.

And you say, that you cannot imagine but there must be such a proof, because every truth is in itself clear, and one; and therefore that one reason for it, if it be the true reason, must be sufficient; and if sufficient, it is better than many; for multiplicity confounds, especially to weak judgments.

Sir, you have imposed an hard task upon me, I wish I could perform it. For though every truth is one, yet our sight is so feeble, that we cannot (always) come to it directly, but by many inferences, and laying of things together.

But I think, that in the case before us, there is such a proof as you require, and I will set it down as short and plain as I can.

II. First, then, I suppose, that the truth of the doctrine of Christ will be sufficiently evinced, if the matters of fact, which are recorded of him in the gospels, be true; for his miracles, if true, do vouch the truth of what he delivered.

The same is to be said as to Moses. If he brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea in that miraculous manner which is related in Exodus, and did such other wonderful things as are there told of him, it must necessarily follow, that he was sent from God: these being the strongest proofs we can desire, and which every Deist will confess he would acquiesce in, if he saw them with his eyes. Therefore the stress of this cause will depend upon the proof of these matters of fact.

1. And the method I will take, is, first, to lay down such rules, as to the truth of matters of fact in general, that where they all meet, such matters of fact cannot be false. And then, secondly, to show that all these rules do meet in the matters of fact, of Moses, and of Christ; and that they do not meet in the matters of fact of Mahomet, and the heathen deities, or can possibly meet in any imposture whatsoever.

2. The rules are these: 1st, That the matters of fact be such, as that men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it; 2d, That it be done publicly in the face of the world; 3d, That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions to be performed; 4th, That such monuments, and such actions or observances be instituted, and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

3. The two first rules make it impossible for any such matter of fact to be imposed upon men, at the time when such matter of fact was said to be done, because every man's eyes and senses would contradict it. For example: Suppose any man should pretend, that yesterday he divided the Thames, in presence of all the people of London, and carried the whole city, men, women, and children, over to Southwark, on dry land, the waters standing like walls on both sides: I say, it is morally impossible that he could persuade the people of London that this was true, when every man, woman, and child, could contradict him, and say, that this was a notorious falsehood, for that they had not seen the Thames so divided, or had gone over on dry land. Therefore I take it for granted (and I suppose, with the allowance of all the Deists in the world), that no such imposition could be put upon men, at the time when such public matter of fact was said to be done.

4. Therefore it only remains that such matter of fact might be invented some time after, when the men of that generation, wherein the thing was said to be done, are all past and gone; and the credulity of after ages might be imposed upon, to believe that things were done in former ages, which were not.

And for this, the two last rules secure us as much as the two first rules, in the former case; for whenever such a matter of fact came to be invented, if not only monuments were said to remain of it, but likewise that public actions and observances were constantly used ever since the matter of fact was said to be done, the deceit must be detected, by no such monuments appearing, and by the experience of every man, woman, and child, who must know that no such actions or observances were ever used by them. For example: Suppose I should now invent a story of such a thing done a thousand years ago, I might perhaps get some to believe it; but if I say, that not only such a thing was done, but that, from that day to this, every man, at the age of twelve years, had a joint of his little finger cut off; and that every man in the nation did want a joint of such a finger; and that this institution was said to be part of the matter of fact done so many years ago, and vouched as a proof and confirmation of it, and as having descended, without interruption, and been constantly practised, in memory of such matter of fact, all along, from the time that such matter of fact was done: I say, it is impossible I should be believed in such a case, because every one could contradict me, as to the mark of cutting off a joint of the finger; and that being part of my original matter of fact, must demonstrate the whole to be false.

III. Let us now come to the second point, to show that the matters of fact of Moses, and of Christ, have all these rules or marks before mentioned; and that neither the matters of fact of Mahomet, or what is reported of the heathen deities, have the like; and that no impostor can have them all.

1. As to Moses, I suppose it will be allowed me, that he could not have persuaded six hundred thousand men, that he had brought them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea; fed them forty years, without bread, by miraculous manna, and the other matters of fact

recorded in his books, if they had not been true. Because every man's senses that were then alive, must have contradicted it. And therefore he must have imposed upon all their senses, if he could have made them believe it, when it was false, and no such things done. So that here are the first and second of the above-mentioned four marks.

From the same reason, it was equally impossible for him to have made them receive his five books, as truth, and not to have rejected them, as a manifest imposture; which told of all these things as done before their eyes, if they had not been so done. See how positively he speaks to them, Deut. xi. 2, to verse 8: "And know you this day, for I speak not with your children, which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm, and his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land, and what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you; and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day: and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place; and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliah, the son of Reuben, how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel. But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did," &c.

From hence we must suppose it impossible that these books of Moses (if an imposture) could have been invented and put upon the people who were then alive, when all these things were said to be done.

The utmost therefore, that even a suppose can stretch to, is, that these books were wrote in some age after Moses, and put out in his name.

And to this, I say, that if it was so, it was impossible that those books should have been received as the books of Moses, in that age wherein they may have been supposed to have been first invented. Why? Because they speak of themselves as delivered by Moses, and kept in the ark from his time. "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites who bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." Deut. xxxi. 24—26. And there was a copy of this book to be left likewise with the king. "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them." Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

Here then you see that this book of the law speaks of itself, not only as an history or relation of what things were then done, but as the standing and municipal law and statutes of the nation of the Jews, binding the king as well as the people.

Now, in whatever age after Moses, you will suppose this book to have been forged, it was impossible it could be received as truth; because it was not then to be found, either in the ark, or with the king, or any where else: For when first invented, every body must know, that they had never heard of it before.

And therefore they could less believe it to be the book of their statutes, and the standing law of the land, which they had all along received, and by which they had been governed.

Could any man, now at this day, invent a book of statutes or acts of parliament for England, and make it pass upon the nation as the only book of statutes that ever they had known? As impossible was it for the books of Moses (if they were invented in any age after Moses) to have been received for what they declare themselves to be, viz., the statutes and municipal law of the nation of the Jews: and to have persuaded the Jews, that they had owned and acknowledged these books, all along from the days of Moses, to that day in which they were first invented; that is, that they had owned them before they had ever so much as heard of them. Nay, more, the whole nation must, in an instant, forget their former laws and government, if they could receive these books as being their former laws. And they could not otherwise receive them, because they vouched themselves so to be. Let me ask the Deists but one short question: Was there ever a book of sham-laws, which were not the laws of the nation, palmed upon any people, since the world began? If not, with what face can they say this of the book of laws of the Jews? Why will they say that of them, which they confess impossible in any nation, or among any people?

But they must be yet more unreasonable. For the books of Moses have a further demonstration of their truth than even other law-books have: For they not only contain the laws, but give an historical account of their institution, and the practice of them from that time: as of the passover in memory of the death of the first-born in Egypt:* and that the same day, all the first-born of Israel both of man and beast, were by a perpetual law dedicated to God: and the Levites taken for all the first-born of the children of Israel. That Aaron's rod which budded, was kept in the ark, in memory of the rebellion, and wonderful destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and for the confirmation of the priesthood to the tribe of Levi. As likewise the pot of manna, in memory of their having been fed with it forty years in the wilderness. That the brazen serpent was kept (which remained to the days of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 4) in memory of that wonderful deliverance, by only looking upon it, from the biting of the fiery serpents, Num. xxi. 9. The feast of Pentecost, in memory of the dreadful appearance of God upon Mount Horeb, &c.

And besides these remembrances of particular actions and occurrences, there were other solemn institutions in memory of their deliverance out of Egypt, in the general, which included all the particulars. As of the Sabbath, Deut. v. 15. Their daily sacrifices, and yearly expiation; their new moons, and several feasts and fasts. So that there were yearly, monthly, weekly, daily remembrances and recognitions of these things.

And not only so, but the books of the same Moses tell us, that a particular tribe (of Levi) was appointed and consecrated by God, as his priests; by whose hands, and none other, the sacrifices of the people were to be offered, and these solemn institutions to be celebrated. That it was death for any other to approach the altar. That their high priest wore a glorious mitre, and magnificent robes of God's own contrivance, with the miraculous Urim and Thummim in his breast-plate, whence the Divine responses were given.† That at his word, the king and all the people were to go out, and to come in. That these Levites, were likewise the chief judges, even in all civil causes, and that it was death to resist their sen-

* Num. viii. 17, 18. † Num. xxvii. 21.

tence.* Now, whenever it can be supposed that these books of Moses were forged in some ages after Moses, it is impossible they could have been received as true, unless the forgers could have made the whole nation believe, that they had received these books from their fathers, had been instructed in them when they were children, and had taught them to their children; moreover, that they had all been circumcised, and did circumcise their children, in pursuance to what was commanded in these books: that they had observed the yearly passover, the weekly sabbath, the new moons, and all these several feasts, fasts, and ceremonies commanded in these books: that they had never eaten any swine's flesh, or other meats prohibited in these books: that they had a magnificent tabernacle, with a visible priesthood to administer in it, which was confined to the tribe of Levi; over whom was placed a glorious high-priest, clothed with great and mighty prerogatives: whose death only could deliver those that were fled to the cities of refuge.† And that these priests were their ordinary judges, even in civil matters: I say, was it possible to have persuaded a whole nation of men, that they had known and practised all these things, if they had not done it? or, secondly, to have received a book for truth, which said they had practised them, and appealed to that practice? So that here are the third and fourth of the marks above-mentioned.

But now let us descend to the utmost degree of supposition, viz., that these things were practised, before these books of Moses were forged; and that those books did only impose upon the nation, in making them believe, that they had kept these observances in memory of such and such things, as were inserted in those books.

Well then, let us proceed upon this supposition, (however groundless) and now, will not the same impossibilities occur, as in the former case? For, first, this must suppose that the Jews kept all these observances in memory of nothing, or without knowing any thing of their original, or the reason why they kept them. Whereas these very observances did express the ground and reason of their being kept, as the passover, in memory of God's passing over the children of the Israelites, in that night wherein he slew all the first-born of Egypt, and so of the rest.

But, secondly, let us suppose, contrary both to reason and matter of fact, that the Jews did not know any reason at all why they kept these observances; yet was it possible to put it upon them, that they had kept these observances in memory of what they had never heard of before that day, whensoever you will suppose that these books of Moses were first forged? For example, suppose I should now forge some romantic story, of strange things done a thousand years ago, and in confirmation of this, should endeavour to persuade the Christian world, that they had all along, from that day to this, kept the first day of the week in memory of such an hero, an Apollonius, a Barcosbas, or a Mahomet; and had all been baptized in his name; and swore by his name, and upon that very book, (which I had then forged, and which they never saw before) in their public judicatures; that this book was their gospel and law, which they had ever since that time, these thousand years past, universally received and owned, and none other. I would ask any Deist, whether he thinks it possible that such a cheat could pass, or such a legend be received as the gospel of Christians; and that they could be made believe that they never had any other gospel? The same reason is as to the books of Moses; and must be, as to every matter of fact, which has all the four marks before mentioned; and these marks secure any such matter of fact as much from being invented and imposed in any after ages, as at the time when such matters of fact were said to be done.

Let me give one very familiar example more in this case. There is the Stonehenge in Salisbury-plain, every body knows it; and yet none knows the reason why those great stones were set there, or by whom, or in memory of what.

Now, suppose I should write a book to-morrow, and tell there, that these stones were set up by Hercules, Polyphemus, or Garagantua, in memory of such and such of their actions. And for a further confirmation of this, should say in this book, that it was wrote at the time when such actions were done, and by the very actors themselves, or eye witnesses. And that this book had been received as truth, and quoted by authors of the greatest reputation in all ages since. Moreover that this book was well known in England, and enjoined by act of parliament to be taught our children, and that we did teach it to our children, and had been taught it ourselves when we were children. I ask any Deist, whether he thinks this could pass upon England? And whether, if I, or any other should insist upon it, we should not, instead of being believed, be sent to Bedlam?

Now, let us compare this with the Stonehenge, as I may call it, or twelve great stones set up at Gilgal, which is told in the fourth chapter of Joshua. There it is said, verse 6, that the reason why they were set up, was, that when their children, in after ages, should ask the meaning of it, it should be told them.

And the thing in memory of which they were set up, was such as could not possibly be imposed upon that nation, at that time when it was said to be done: it was as wonderful and miraculous as their passage through the Red Sea.

And withal, free from a very poor objection, which the Deists have advanced against that miracle of the Red Sea: thinking to salve it by a spring-tide, with the concurrence of a strong wind, happening at the same time; which left the sand so dry, as that the Israelites being all foot, might pass through the oozy places and holes, which it must be supposed the sea left behind it: but that the Egyptians, being all horse and chariots, stuck in those holes, and were entangled, so as that they could not march so fast as the Israelites: and that this was all the meaning of its being said, that God took off their (the Egyptians) chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily. So that they would make nothing extraordinary, at least, nothing miraculous, in all this action.

This is advanced in Le Clerc's *Dissertations upon Genesis*, lately printed in Holland, and that part, with others of the like tendency, endeavouring to resolve other miracles, as that of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c., into the mere natural causes, are put into English by the well known T. Brown, for the edification of the Deists in England.

But these gentlemen have forgot, that the Israelites had great herds of many thousand cattle with them; which would be apter to stray, and fall into those holes and oozy places in the strand, than horses with riders who might direct them.

But such precarious and silly supposes are not worth the answering. If there had been no more in this passage through the Red Sea than that of a spring tide, &c., it had been impossible for Moses to have made the Israelites believe that relation given of it in Exodus, with so many particulars, which themselves saw to be true.

And all those Scriptures which magnify this action, and appeal to it as a full demonstration of the miracu-

* Deut. xvii. 8—13; 1 Chron. xxiii. 4. † Num. xxxv. 25, 28.

lous power of God, must be reputed as romance or legend.

I say this, for the sake of some Christians, who think it no prejudice to the truth of the Holy Bible, but rather an advantage, as rendering it more easy to be believed, if they can solve whatever seems miraculous in it, by the power of second causes: and so to make all, as they speak, natural and easy. Wherein, if they could prevail, the natural and easy result would be, not to believe one word in all those sacred oracles. For if things be not as they are told in any relation, that relation must be false. And if false in part, we cannot trust to it, either in whole or in part.

Here are to be excepted, mistranslations and errors, either in copy or in press. But where there is no room for supposing of these, as where all copies do agree; there we must either receive all, or reject all. I mean in any book that pretends to be written from the mouth of God. For in other common histories, we may believe part, and reject part, as we see cause.

But to return. The passage of the Israelites over Jordan, in memory of which those stones at Gilgal were set up, is free from all those little carpings beforementioned, that are made as to the passage through the Red Sea. For notice was given to the Israelites the day before, of this great miracle to be done. Josh. iii. 5. It was done at noon-day, before the whole nation. And when the waters of Jordan were divided, it was not at any low ebb, but at the time when that river overflowed all his banks, verse 15. And it was done, not by winds, or in length of time, which winds must take to do it; but all on the sudden, as soon as the "feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, then the waters which came down from above, stood and rose up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over, right against Jericho. The priests stood in the midst of Jordan, till all the armies of Israel had passed over. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up, out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lift up upon the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks as they did before. And the people came out of Jordan, on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho, and those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then shall ye let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over: as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over. That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever." Chap. iv. from verse 18.

If the passage over the Red Sea, had been only taking advantage of a spring tide, or the like, how would this teach all the people of the earth, that the hand of the Lord was mighty? How would a thing no more remarkable have been taken notice of through all the world? How would it have taught Israel to fear the Lord, when they must know, that notwithstanding of all these big words, there was so little in it! How could they have believed, or received a book, as truth, which they knew, told the matter so far otherwise from what it was?

But, as I said, this passage over Jordan, which is here compared to that of the Red Sea, is free from all those cavils that are made, as to that of the Red Sea, and is a further attestation to it, being said to be done in the same manner as was that of the Red Sea.

Now, to form our argument, let us suppose, that there never was any such thing as that passage over Jordan. That these stones at Gilgal were set up upon some other occasion, in some after age. And then, that some designing man invented this book of Joshua, and said, that it was wrote by Joshua at that time. And gave this stonage at Gilgal for a testimony of the truth of it. Would not every body say to him, we know the stonage at Gilgal, but we never heard before of this reason for it? Nor of this book of Joshua? Where has it been all this while? And where, and how came you, after so many ages, to find it? Besides, this book tells us, that this passage over Jordan was ordained to be taught our children, from age to age: and therefore, that they were always to be instructed in the meaning of that stonage at Gilgal, as a memorial of it. But we were never taught it, when we were children; nor did ever teach our children any such thing. And it is not likely that could have been forgotten, while so remarkable a stonage did continue, which was set up for that and no other end!

And if, for the reasons before given, no such imposition could be put upon us as to the stonage in Salisbury plain; how much less could it be to the stonage at Gilgal?

And if where we know not the reason of a bare naked monument, such a sham reason cannot be imposed, how much more is it impossible to impose upon us in actions and observances, which we celebrate in memory of particular passages? How impossible to make us forget those passages which we daily commemorate; and persuade us, that we had always kept such institutions in memory of what we never heard of before; that is, that we knew it, before we knew it!

And if we find it thus impossible for an imposition to be put upon us, even in some things which have not all the four marks before mentioned; how much more impossible is it, that any deceit should be in that thing where all the four marks do meet!

This has been showed in the first place, as to the matters of fact of Moses.

2. Therefore I come now (secondly) to show, that as in the matters of fact of Moses, so likewise all these four marks do meet in the matters of fact, which are recorded in the gospel of our blessed Saviour. And my work herein will be the shorter, because all that is said before of Moses and his books, is every way as applicable to Christ and his gospel. His works and his miracles are there said to be done publicly in the face of the world, as he argued to his accusers, "I spake openly to the world, and in secret have I said nothing," John xviii. 20. It is told, Acts ii. 41, that three thousand at one time; and Acts iv. 4, that above five thousand at another time, were converted, upon conviction of what themselves had seen, and what had been done publicly before their eyes, wherein it was impossible to have imposed upon them. Therefore here were the two first of the rules before-mentioned.

Then for the two second: Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted as perpetual memorials of these things; and they were not instituted in after ages, but at the very time when these things were said to be done; and have been observed without interruption, in all ages through the whole Christian world, down all the way from that time to this. And Christ himself did ordain apostles and other ministers of his gospel, to preach and administer the sacraments; and

to govern his church: and that always, even unto the end of the world.* Accordingly they have continued by regular succession, to this day: and, no doubt, ever shall, while the earth shall last. So that the Christian clergy are as notorious a matter of fact, as the tribe of Levi among the Jews. And the gospel is as much a law to the Christians, as the book of Moses to the Jews: and it being part of the matters of fact related in the gospel, that such an order of men were appointed by Christ, and to continue to the end of the world; consequently, if the gospel was a fiction, and invented (as it must be) in some ages after Christ; then, at that time when it was first invented, there could be no such order of clergy, as derived themselves from the institution of Christ; which must give the lie to the gospel, and demonstrate the whole to be false. And the matters of fact of Christ being pressed to be true, no otherwise than as there was at that time (whenever the Deists will suppose the gospel to be forged) not only public sacraments of Christ's institution, but an order of clergy, likewise of his appointment to administer them: and it being impossible there could be any such things before they were invented, it is as impossible that they should be received when invented. And therefore, by what was said above, it was as impossible to have imposed upon mankind in this matter, by inventing of it in after ages, as at the time when those things were said to be done.

3. The matters of fact of Mahomet, or what is fabled of the deities, do all want some of the aforesaid four rules, whereby the certainty of matters of fact is demonstrated. First, for Mahomet, he pretended to no miracles, as he tells us in his Alcoran, c. 6, &c., and those which are commonly told of him pass among the Mahometans themselves, but as legendary fables: and, as such, are rejected by the wise and learned among them; as the legends of their saints are in the Church of Rome. See Dr Prideaux his *Life of Mahomet*, page 34.

But, in the next place, those which are told of him, do all want the two first rules before-mentioned. For his pretended converse with the moon: his mersa, or night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven, &c., were not performed before any body. We have only his own word for them. And they are as groundless as the delusions of the Fox or Muggleton among ourselves. The same is to be said (in the second place) of the fables of the heathen gods, of Mercury's stealing sheep, Jupiter's turning himself into a bull, and the like; besides the folly and unworthiness of such senseless pretended miracles. And moreover the wise among the heathen did reckon no otherwise of these but as fables, which had a mythology, or mystical meaning in them, of which several of them have given us the rationale or explication. And it is plain enough that Ovid meant no other by all his *Metamorphoses*.

It is true, the heathen deities had their priests: they had likewise feasts, games, and other public institutions in memory of them. But all these want the fourth mark, viz., that such priesthood and institutions should commence from the time that such things as they commemorate were said to be done; otherwise they cannot secure after ages from the imposture, by detecting it, at the time when first invented, as hath been argued before. But the Bacchanalia, and other heathen feasts, were instituted many ages after what was reported of these gods was said to be done, and therefore can be no proof. And the priests of Bacchus, Apollo, &c., were not ordained by these supposed gods: but were appointed by others, in after ages, only in honour to them. And therefore these orders of priests are no evidence to the matters of fact which are reported of their gods.

IV. Now, to apply what has been said. You may challenge all the Deists in the world to show any action that is fabulous, which has all the four rules or marks before-mentioned. No, it is impossible. And (to resume a little what is spoke to before) the histories of Exodus and the gospel never could have been received, if they had not been true; because the institution of the priesthood of Levi, and of Christ; of the Sabbath, the passover, of circumcision, of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, &c., are there related, as descending all the way down from those times, without interruption. And it is full as impossible to persuade men that they had been circumcised or baptized, had circumcised or baptized their children, celebrated passovers, Sabbaths, sacraments, &c., under the government and administration of a certain order of priests, if they had done none of these things, as to make them believe that they had gone through seas upon dry land, seen the dead raised, &c. And without believing these, it was impossible that either the law or the gospel could have been received.

And the truth of the matters of fact of Exodus and the gospel, being no otherwise pressed upon men, than as they have practised such public institutions, it is appealing to the senses of mankind for the truth of them; and makes it impossible for any to have invented such stories in after ages, without a palpable detection of the cheat when first invented; as impossible as to have imposed upon the senses of mankind, at the time when such public matters of fact were said to be done.

V. I do not say, that every thing which wants these four marks is false: but, that nothing can be false, which has them all.

I have no manner of doubt that there was such a man as Julius Cæsar, that he fought at Pharsalia, was killed in the senate house, and many other matters of fact of ancient times, though we keep no public observances in memory of them.

But this show that the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ, have come down to us better guarded than any other matters of fact, how true soever.

And yet our Deists, who would laugh any man out the world as an irrational brute, that should offer to deny Cæsar or Alexander, Homer or Virgil, their public works and actions, do, at the same time, value themselves as the only men of wit and sense, of free, generous and unbiassed judgments, for ridiculing the histories of Moses and of Christ, that are infinitely better attested, and guarded with infallible marks, which the others want.

VI. Besides that the importance of the subject would oblige all men to inquire more narrowly into the one than the other: for what consequence is it to me, or to the world, whether there was such a man as Cæsar, whether he beat, or was beaten at Pharsalia, whether Homer or Virgil wrote such books, and whether what is related in the Iliads or Æneids be true or false? It is not twopence up or down to any man in the world. And therefore it is worth no man's while to inquire into it, either to oppose or justify the truth of these relations.

But our very souls and bodies, both this life and eternity are concerned in the truth of what is related in the holy Scriptures; and therefore men would be more inquisitive to search into the truth of these, than of any other matters of fact; examine and sift them narrowly; and find out the deceit, if any such could be found: for it concerned them nearly, and was of the last importance to them.

How unreasonable then is it to reject these matters

* Matt. xviii. 20.

of fact, so sifted, so examined, and so attested as no other matters of fact in the world ever were; and yet to think it the most highly unreasonable, even to madness, to deny other matters of fact, which have not the thousandth part of their evidence, and are of no consequence at all to us whether true or false!

VII. There are several other topics, from whence the truth of the Christian religion is evinced to all who will judge by reason, and give themselves leave to consider. As the improbability that ten or twelve poor illiterate fishermen should form a design of converting the whole world to believe their delusions; and the impossibility of their effecting it, without force of arms, learning, oratory, or any one visible thing that could recommend them! And to impose a doctrine quite opposite to the lusts and pleasures of men, and all worldly advantages or enjoyments! And this in an age of so great learning and sagacity as that wherein the gospel was first preached! That these apostles should not only undergo all the scorn and contempt, but the severest persecutions and most cruel deaths that could be inflicted, in attestation to what themselves knew to be a mere deceit and forgery of their own contriving! Some have suffered for errors which they thought to be truth, but never any for what they themselves knew to be lies. And the apostles must know what they taught to be lies, if it was so, because they spoke of those things which they said they had both seen and heard, had looked upon and handled with their hands, &c.*

Neither can it be, that they, perhaps, might have proposed some temporal advantages to themselves, but missed of them, and met with sufferings instead of them: for, if it had been so, it is more than probable, that when they saw their disappointment, they would have discovered their conspiracy, especially when they might not have only saved their lives, but got great rewards for doing of it. That not one of them should ever have been brought to do this.

But this is not all: for they tell us that their Master bid them expect nothing but sufferings in this world. This is the tenure of that gospel which they taught; and they told the same to all whom they converted. So that here was no disappointment.

For all that were converted by them, were converted upon the certain expectation of sufferings, and bidden prepare for it. Christ commanded his disciples to take up their cross daily, and follow him; and told them, that in the world they should have tribulation; that whoever did not forsake father, mother, wife, children, lands, and their very lives, could not be his disciples; that he who sought to save his life in this world, should lose it in the next.

Now, that this despised doctrine of the cross should prevail so universally against the allurements of flesh and blood, and all the blandishments of this world; against the rage and persecution of all the kings and powers of the earth, must show its original to be Divine, and its protector Almighty. What is it else could conquer without arms, persuade without rhetoric; overcome enemies; disarm tyrants; and subdue empires without opposition!

VIII. We may add to all this, the testimonies of the most bitter enemies and persecutors of Christianity, both Jews and Gentiles, to the truth of the matter of fact of Christ, such as Josephus and Tacitus; of which the first flourished about forty years after the death of Christ, and the other about seventy years after: so that they were capable of examining into the truth, and wanted not prejudice and malice sufficient to have inclined them to deny the matter of fact itself of Christ: but their confessing to it, as likewise Lucian, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian the apostate; the Mahometans since, and all other enemies of Christianity that have arisen in the world, is an undeniable attestation to the truth of the matter of fact.

IX. But there is another argument more strong and convincing than even this matter of fact; more than the certainty of what I see with my eyes; and which the apostle Peter called a more sure word, that is proof, that what he saw and heard upon the holy mount, when our blessed Saviour was transfigured before him and two other of the apostles: for having repeated that passage as a proof of that whereof they were eye witnesses, and heard the voice from heaven giving attestation to our Lord Christ, 2 Pet. i. 16—18, he says, verse 19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy," for the proof of this Jesus being the Messiah, that is, the prophecies which had gone before of him from the beginning of the world, and all exactly fulfilled in him.

Men may dispute an imposition or delusion upon our outward senses. But how that can be false, which has been so long, even from the beginning of the world, and so often by all the prophets in several ages foretold; how can this be an imposition or a forgery?

This is particularly insisted on in the *Method with the Jews*. And even the Deists must confess, that that book we call the Old Testament, was in being in the hands of the Jews long before our Saviour came into the world. And if they will be at the pains to compare the prophecies that are there of the Messiah, with the fulfilling of them, as to time, place, and all other circumstances in the person, birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of our blessed Saviour, will find this proof what our apostle here calls it, "a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." Which God grant. Here is no possibility of deceit or imposture.

Old prophecies (and all so agreeing) could not have been contrived to countenance a new cheat: and nothing could be a cheat, that could fulfil all these.

For this, therefore, I refer the Deists to the *Method with the Jews*.

I desire them likewise to look there, Sect. 11., and consider the prophecies given so long ago, of which they see the fulfilling at this day with their own eyes, of the state of the Jews for many ages past and at present, without a king or priest, or temple, or sacrifice, scattered to the four winds, sifted as with a sieve, among all nations; yet preserved, and always so to be, a distinct people from all others of the whole earth. Whereas those mighty monarchies which oppressed the Jews, and which commanded the world in their turns, and had the greatest human prospect of perpetuity, were to be extinguished, as they have been, even that their names should be blotted out from under heaven.

As likewise, that as remarkable of our blessed Saviour, concerning the preservation and progress of the Christian church, when in her swaddling clothes, consisting only of a few poor fishermen. Not by the sword, as that of Mahomet, but under all the persecution of men and hell; which yet should not prevail against her.

But though I offer these as not to be slighted by the Deists, to which they can show nothing equal in all profane history, and in which it is impossible any cheat can lie; yet I put them not upon the same foot as the prophecies before-mentioned of the marks and coming of the Messiah, which have been since the world began.

And that general expectation of the whole earth, at the time of his coming, insisted upon in the *Method with the Jews*, Sect. 5., is greatly to be noticed.

But, I say, the foregoing prophecies of our Saviour

* Acts iv. 20. 1 John i. 1.

are so strong a proof, as even miracles would not be sufficient to break their authority.

I mean, if it were possible that a true miracle could be wrought, in contradiction to them: for that would be for God to contradict himself.

But no sign or wonder, that could possibly be solved, should shake this evidence.

It is this that keeps the Jews in their obstinacy; though they cannot deny the matters of fact done by our blessed Saviour to be truly miracles, if so done as said. Nor can they deny that they were so done, because they have all the four marks before mentioned. Yet they cannot yield! Why? Because they think that the gospel is in contradiction to the law; which, if it were, the consequence would be unavoidable, that both could not be true. To solve this, is the business of the *Method with the Jews*. But the contradiction which they suppose, is in their comments that they put upon the law; especially they expect a literal fulfilling of those promises of the restoration of Jerusalem, and outward glories of the church, of which there is such frequent mention in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and all the prophets. And many Christians do expect the same, and take those texts as literally as the Jews do. We do believe and pray for the conversion of the Jews. For this end they have been so miraculously preserved, according to the prophecies so long before of it. And when that time shall come, as they are the most honourable and ancient of all the nations on the earth, so will their church return to be the mother Christian church as she was at first; and Rome must surrender to Jerusalem. Then all nations will flow thither; and even Ezekiel's temple may be literally built there, in the metropolis of the whole earth; which Jerusalem must be, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall meet with the conversion of the Jews. For no nation will then contend with the Jews, nor church with Jerusalem for supremacy. All nations will be ambitious to draw their original from the Jews, "whose are the fathers, and from whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came."

Then will be fulfilled that outward grandeur and restoration of the Jews and of Jerusalem, which they expect, pursuant to the prophecies.

They pretend not that this is limited to any particular time of the reign of the Messiah. They are sure it will not be at the beginning; for they expect to go through great conflicts and trials with their Messiah (as the Christian church has done) before his final conquest, and that they come to reign with him. So that this is no obstruction to their embracing of Christianity. They see the same things fulfilled in us, which they expect themselves; and we expect the same things they do.

I tell this to the Deists, lest they may think that the Jews have some stronger arguments than they know of, that they are not persuaded by the miracles of our blessed Saviour, and by the fulfilling of all the prophecies in him, that were made concerning the Messiah.

As I said before, I would not plead even miracles against these.

And if this is sufficient to persuade a Jew, it is much more so to a Deist, who labours not under these objections.

Besides, I would not seem to clash with that (in a sound sense) reasonable caution used by Christian writers, not to put the issue of the truth wholly upon miracles, without this addition, when not done in contradiction to the revelations already given in the holy Scriptures.

And they do it upon this consideration, that though it is impossible to suppose, that God would work a real miracle, in contradiction to what he has already revealed; yet, men may be imposed upon by false and seeming miracles, and pretended revelations (as there are many examples, especially in the Church of Rome), and so may be shaken in the faith, if they keep not to the holy Scriptures as their rule.

We are told, 2 Thess. ii. 9, "of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders. And Rev. xiii. 14; xvi. 14; and xix. 20, of the devil, and false prophets working miracles. But the word, in all these places, is only *Σημεῖα, Signs*, that is, as it is rendered, Matt. xxv. 24, which, though sometimes it may be used to signify real miracles, yet not always, not in these places. For though every miracle be a sign and a wonder, yet every sign or wonder is not a miracle.

X. Here it may be proper to consider a common topic of the Deists, who when they are not able to stand out against the evidence of fact, that such and such miracles have been done, then turn about, and deny such things to be miracles, at least that we can never be sure whether any wonderful thing that is shown to us be a true or a false miracle.

And the great argument they go upon is this, that a miracle being that which exceeds the power of nature, we cannot know what exceeds it, unless we knew the utmost extent of the power of nature; and no man pretends to know that, therefore that no man can certainly know whether any event be miraculous: and, consequently, he may be cheated in his judgment betwixt true and false miracles.

To which I answer, that men may be so cheated, and there are many examples of it.

But that though we may not always know when we are cheated, yet we can certainly tell, in many cases, when we are not cheated.

For though we do not know the utmost extent of the power of nature, perhaps in any one thing; yet it does not follow that we know not the nature of any thing in some measure; and that certainly too. For example, though I do not know the utmost extent of the power of fire, yet I certainly know that it is the nature of fire to burn; and that when proper fuel is administered to it, it is contrary to the nature of fire not to consume it. Therefore, if I see three men taken off the street, in their common wearing apparel, and without any preparation cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, and that the flame was so fierce that it burnt up those men that threw them in, and yet that these who were thrown in should walk up and down in the bottom of the furnace, and I should see a fourth person with them of glorious appearance, like the Son of God. And that these men should come up again out of the furnace, without any harm, or so much as the smell of fire upon themselves, or their clothes, I could not be deceived in thinking that there was a stop put to the nature of fire, as to these men; and that it had its effect upon the men whom it burned, at the same time.

Again: though I cannot tell how wonderful and sudden an increase of corn might be produced by the concurrence of many causes, as a warm climate, the fertility of the soil, &c., yet this I can certainly know, that there is not that natural force in the breath of two or three words, spoken to multiply one small loaf of bread so fast, in the breaking of it, as truly and really, not only in appearance and show to the eye, but to fill the bellies of several thousand hungry persons; and that the fragments should be much more than the bread was at first.

So neither in a word spoken, to raise the dead, cure diseases, &c.

Therefore, though we know not the utmost extent

of the power of nature; yet we certainly know what is contrary to the nature of several such things as we do know.

And, therefore, though we may be cheated, and imposed upon in many seeming miracles and wonders; yet there are some things wherein we may be certain.

But further, the Deists acknowledge a God of an Almighty power, who made all things.

Yet they would put it out of his power to make any revelation of his will to mankind. For if we cannot be certain of any miracle, how should we know when God sent any thing extraordinary to us?

Nay, how should we know the ordinary power of nature, if we knew not what exceeded it? If we know not what is natural, how do we know there is such a thing as nature? That all is not supernatural, all miracles, and so disputable, till we come to downright scepticism, and doubt the certainty of our outward senses, whether we see, hear, or feel; or all be not a miraculous illusion!

Which, because I know the Deists are not inclined to do, therefore I will return to pursue my argument upon the conviction of our outward senses, desiring only this, that they would allow the senses of other men to be as certain as their own; which they cannot refuse, since without this they can have no certainty of their own.

XI. Therefore, from what has been said, the cause is summed up shortly in this: that though we cannot see what was done before our time, yet by the marks which I have laid down concerning the certainty of matters of fact done before our time, we may be as much assured of the truth of them, as if we saw them with our eyes; because whatever matter of fact has all the four marks before-mentioned, could never have been invented and received but upon the conviction of the outward senses of all those who did receive it, as before is demonstrated. And therefore this topic which I have chosen, does stand upon the conviction even of men's outward senses. And since you have confined me to one topic, I have not insisted upon the other, which I have only named.

XII. And now it lies upon the Deists, if they would appear as men of reason, to show some matter of fact of former ages, which they allow to be true, that has greater evidence of its truth, than the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ; otherwise they cannot, with any show of reason, reject the one, and yet admit of the other.

But I have given them greater latitude than this, for I have shown such marks of the truth of the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ; as no other matters of fact of those times, however true, have, but these only: and I put it upon them to show any forgery that has all these marks.

This is a short issue. Keep them close to this. This determines the cause all at once.

Let them produce their Apollonius Tyanæus, whose life was put into English by the execrable Charles Blount,* and compared with all the wit and malice he was master of, to the life and miracles of our blessed Saviour.

Let them take aid from all the legends in the church of Rome, those pious cheats, the sorest disgraces of Christianity; and which have bid the fairest of any one contrivance, to overturn the certainty of the miracles of Christ and his apostles, and whole truth of the gospel, by putting them all upon the same foot: at least they are so understood by the generality of their devotees, though disowned and laughed at by the learned, and men of sense among them.

Let them pick and choose the most probable of all the fables of the heathen deities, and see if they can find in any of these, the four marks before-mentioned.

Otherwise, let them submit to the irrefragable certainty of the Christian religion.

XIII. But if, notwithstanding all that is said, the Deists will still contend that all this is but priestcraft, the invention of priests for their own profit, &c., then they will give us an idea of priests, far different from what they intend: for then we must look upon these priests, not only as the cunningest and wisest of mankind, but we shall be tempted to adore them as deities, who have such power as to impose at their pleasure, upon the senses of mankind, to make them believe that they had practised such public institutions, enacted them by laws, taught them to their children, &c., when they had never done any of these things, or ever so much as heard of them before: and then, upon the credit of their believing that they had done such things as they never did, to make them further believe, upon the same foundation, whatever they pleased to impose upon them, as to former ages: I say, such a power as this must exceed all that is human; and consequently make us rank these priests far above the condition of mortals.

2. Nay, this were to make them outdo all that has ever been related of the infernal powers: for though their legerdemain has extended to deceive some unwary beholders, and their power of working some seeming miracles has been great, yet it never reached, nor ever was supposed to reach so far, as to deceive the senses of all mankind, in matters of such public and notorious nature as those of which we now speak, to make them believe, that they had enacted laws for such public observances, continually practised them, taught them to their children, and had been instructed in them themselves, from their childhood, if they had never enacted, practised, taught, or been taught such things.

3. And as this exceeds all the power of hell and devils, so is it more than ever God Almighty has done since the foundation of the world. None of the miracles that he has shown, or belief which he has required to any thing that he has revealed, has ever contradicted the outward senses of any one man in the world, much less of all mankind together. For miracles being appeals to our outward senses, if they should overthrow the certainty of our outward senses, must destroy with it all their own certainty as to us; since we have no other way to judge of a miracle exhibited to our senses, than upon the supposition of the certainty of our senses, upon which we give credit to a miracle, that is shown to our senses.

4. This, by the way, is a yet unanswered argument against the miracle of transubstantiation, and shows the weakness of the defence which the Church of Rome offers for it, (from whom the Socinians have licked it up, and of late have gloried much in it amongst us) that the doctrines of the Trinity or Incarnation, contain as great seeming absurdities as that of transubstantiation: for I would ask, which of our senses it is which the doctrines of the Trinity or incarnation do contradict? Is it our seeing, hearing, feeling, taste or smell? Whereas transubstantiation does contradict all of these. Therefore the compari-

* The hand of that scorner, which durst write such outrageous blasphemy against his Maker, the Divine vengeance has made his own executioner. Which I would not have mentioned (because the like judgment has befallen others), but that the Theistical Club have set this up as a principle, and printed a vindication of this same Blount for murdering of himself, by way of justification of self-murder; which some of them have since, as well as formerly, horridly practised upon themselves. Therefore this is no common judgment to which they are delivered, but a visible mark set upon them, to show how far God has forsaken them; and as a caution to all Christians to beware of them, and not to come near the tents of these wicked men, lest they perish in their destruction, both of soul and body.

son is exceedingly short, and out of purpose. But to return.

If the Christian religion be a cheat, and nothing else but the invention of priests, and carried on by their craft, it makes their power and wisdom greater than that of men, angels, or devils; and more than God himself ever yet showed or expressed, to deceive and impose upon the senses of mankind, in such public and notorious matters of fact.

XIV. And this miracle, which the Deists must run into to avoid these recorded of Moses and Christ, is much greater and more astonishing than all the Scriptures tell of them.

So that these men who laugh at all miracles are now obliged to account for the greatest of all, how the senses of mankind could be imposed upon in such public matters of fact.

And how then can they make the priests the most contemptible of all mankind, since they make them the sole authors of this the greatest of miracles?

XV. And since the Deists (these men of sense and reason) have so vile and mean an idea of the priests of all religions, why do they not recover the world out of the possession and government of such blockheads? Why do they suffer kings and states to be led by them; to establish their deceits by laws, and inflict penalties upon the opposers of them? Let the Deists try their hands; they have been trying, and are now busy about it. And free liberty they have. Yet have they not prevailed, nor ever yet did prevail in any civilized or generous nation. And though they have some inroads among the Hottentots, and some other the most brutal part of mankind, yet are they still exploded, and priests have and do prevail against them, among not only the greatest, but best part of the world, and the most glorious for arts, learning and war.

XVI. For as the devil does ape God, in his institutions of religion, his feasts, sacrifices, &c., so likewise in his priests, without whom no religion, whether true or false, can stand. False religion is but a corruption of the true. The true was before it, though it be followed close upon the heels.

The revelation made to Moses is elder than any history extant in the heathen world. The heathens, in imitation of him, pretended likewise to their revelations: but I have given those marks which distinguish them from the true: none of them have those four marks before-mentioned.

Now the Deists think all revelations to be equally pretended, and a cheat; and the priests of all religions to be the same contrivers and jugglers; and therefore they proclaim war equally against all, and are equally engaged to bear the brunt of all.

And if the contest be only betwixt the Deists and the priests, which of them are the men of the greatest parts and sense, let the effects determine it; and let the Deists yield the victory to their conquerors, who by their own confession carry all the world before them.

XVII. If the Deists say, that this is because all the world are blockheads, as well as those priests who govern them; that all are blockheads except the Deists, who vote themselves only to be men of sense; this (besides the modesty of it) will spoil their great and beloved topic, in behalf of what they call Natural Religion, against the Revealed, viz., appealing to the common reason of mankind: this they set up against revelation; think this to be sufficient for all the uses of men, here or hereafter, (if there be any after state) and therefore that there is no use of revelation: this common reason they advance as infallible, at least as the surest guide, yet now cry out upon it, when it turns against them; when this common reason runs after revelation (as it always has done), then common reason is a beast, and we must look for reason, not from the common sentiments of mankind, but only among the beaux, the Deists.

XVIII. Therefore, if the Deists would avoid the mortification (which will be very uneasy to them) to yield and submit to be subdued and hewed down before the priests, whom of all mankind they hate and despise; if they would avoid this, let them confess, as the truth is, that religion is no invention of priests, but of Divine original; that priests were instituted by the same Author of religion; and that their order is a perpetual and living monument of the matters of fact of their religion, instituted from the time that such matters of fact were said to be done, as the Levites from Moses, the apostles and succeeding clergy from Christ, to this day; that no heathen priests can say the same; they were not appointed by the gods whom they served, but by others in after ages; they cannot stand the test of the four rules before-mentioned, which the Christian priests can do, and they only. Now the Christian priesthood, as instituted by Christ himself, and continued by succession to this day, being as impregnable and flagrant a testimony to the truth of the matters of fact of Christ, as the sacraments, or any other public institutions: besides that, if the priesthood were taken away, the sacraments and other public institutions, which are administered by their hands, must fall with them: therefore the devil has been most busy, and bent his greatest force in all ages against the priesthood, knowing that if that goes down all goes with it.*

XIX. With the Deists, in this cause, are joined the Quakers and other of our Dissenters, who throw off the succession of our priesthood (by which only it can be demonstrated), together with the sacraments and public festivals. And if the devil could have prevailed to have these dropt, the Christian religion would lose the most undeniable and demonstrative proof for the truth of the matter of fact of our Saviour, upon which the truth of his doctrine does depend. Therefore we may see the artifice and malice of the devil, in all these attempts. And let those wretched instruments whom he ignorantly (and some by a misguided zeal) has deluded thus to undermine Christi-

* In this and the succeeding paragraph, the writer seems to give utterance to sentiments, in which only High Church Episcopalians will sympathize with him. At least they are not entertained by the great body of Christians of any denomination, and so it is hazardous to attempt to rest any serious argument in behalf of Christianity upon them. There can be no question that the Lord Jesus Christ established the office of the Christian ministry as a permanent office in his church; and that in all ages, through all periods of darkness and corruption, there have, agreeably to his promise, been a body of faithful men taught by Christian ministers. He has always had a church to glorify and serve him; but whether the ministers of that church have all succeeded each other by regular ordination, is a very different and very inferior question. Scripture, which speaks so certainly of a succession of the truth—a succession of faithful men in every age, says nothing of a succession of ordination, far less that the validity of the sacraments, and of the church's testimony to Christianity, depend upon the unbroken regularity of that succession. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to show that the alleged apostolic succession among Episcopalians, has not often been broken. It is certain that in many cases it has been broken; and that the eminent Christian churches of the Waldenses and Albigenses—the only churches which, for centuries, held the pure light of Christianity—could never boast of that succession in ordination, of which so many idle and foolish things are at present spoken. However desirable a regularly ordained ministry may be, descending by uninterrupted order from the apostles, the validity of the sacraments does not stand or fall with it. The succession may be broken, or the ministry may become so corrupt as to lose the character of the ministry of Christ; and still Christianity may live, and its ordinances be effectively administered by others. It would be hard, as well as dangerous, to make the promise of Christ responsible for more than it actually contains—to burden it with a succession of ordination, where he meant only to secure a succession of truth. It would be difficult to see what virtues men notoriously ignorant, ungodly, and profane, as multitudes of the ordained in the Church of Rome have been, could communicate to others. How can the enemies of gospel truth be the lawful and effective dispensers of its ordinances—in many cases, its *only* lawful and elective dispensers? The pretence is absurd.—Editor.

anity, now at last look back and see the snare in which they have been taken: for if they had prevailed, or ever should, Christianity dies with them. At least it will be rendered precarious, as a thing of which no certain proof can be given. Therefore let those of them who have any zeal for the truth, bless God that they have not prevailed; and quickly leave them; and let all others be aware of them.

And let us consider and honour the priesthood, sacraments, and other public institutions of Christ, not only as means of grace and helps to devotion, but as the great evidences of the Christian religion.

Such evidences as no pretended revelation ever had, or can have. Such as do plainly distinguish it from all foolish legends and impostures whatsoever.

XX. And now, last of all, if one word of advice would not be lost upon men who think so unmeasurably of themselves as the Deists, you may represent to them what a condition they are in, who spend that life and sense which God has given them, in ridiculing the greatest of his blessings, his revelations of Christ, and by Christ, to redeem those from eternal misery, who shall believe in him, and obey his laws. And that God, in his wonderful mercy and wisdom, has so guarded his revelations, as that it is past the power of men or devils to counterfeit: and that there is no denying of them, unless we will be so absurd as to deny not only the reason but the certainty of the outward senses, not only of one, or two, or three, but of mankind in general. That this case is so very plain, that nothing but want of thought can hinder any to discover it. That they must yield it to be so plain, unless they can show some forgery which has all the four marks before set down. But if they cannot do this, they must quit their cause, and yield a happy victory over themselves: or else sit down under all that ignominy, with which they have loaded the priests, of being, not only the most pernicious, but (what will gall them more) the most inconsiderate and inconsiderable of mankind.

Therefore, let them not think it an undervaluing of their worthiness, that their whole cause is comprised within so narrow a compass: and no more time bestowed upon it than it is worth.

But let them rather reflect how far they have been all this time from Christianity; whose rudiments they are yet to learn! How far from the way of salvation! How far the race of their lives is run before they have set one step in the road to heaven. And therefore, how much diligence they ought to use, to redeem all that time they have lost, lest they lose themselves for ever; and be convinced by a dreadful experience, when it is too late, that the gospel is a truth, and of the last consequence.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

CONDUCT AND CHARACTER OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

BY THE

LATE REV. JOHN BONAR,
One of the Ministers of Perth.

THE next important Tract on the Evidences, to which I beg leave to direct the reader's attention, is entitled, "*Observations on the Conduct and Character of Judas Iscariot*, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr James Primrose, by the late Rev. John Bonar, one of the Ministers of Perth." The author was one of a long line of able and faithful ministers of the Church of Scotland. His grandfather was the excellent Mr Bonar of Torphichen, who bore a part in the distinguished revival of religion in the West of Scotland, with which God was pleased to bless the church, towards the middle of last century. He has had many worthy descendents, both ministers and laymen. At present there are not less than four of them ministers of the Church of Scotland, and all in character and talent not inferior to their ancestors. The Tract was first published about the middle of the last century, when infidelity was fast spreading among the higher classes of the community. The argument I believe to be original. Many would naturally think, that the case of Judas was adverse to the claims of Christ. Mr BONAR shows that it is the very reverse—that he is a distinguished witness in favour of Christianity. Dr Doddridge, who himself thought and wrote not a little upon the Evidences, was much struck with Mr BONAR's view; and, in his *Lectures*, strongly recommends the Tract, "as setting in a most just and beautiful light," the important testimony of the apostate Judas to the innocence of his Master. The publication was reprinted in 1822, and is noticed in some works on the Evidences, but still is comparatively little known. While the argument founded on the case of Judas is in itself complete, it is interesting to consider that it does not stand alone, but is, after all, only an illustration of a great principle on which God conducts the administration of his church, viz., to make enemies do the work of friends. To an infinite mind this is easy, and finely shows forth the Divine power and wisdom. In all ages, God has made the wrath of man to praise him. Heretics, perse-

cutors, infidels, have all unwittingly rendered the most important services in the defence, vindication, and diffusion of the gospel. Had it not been for early errors and abuses, we never would have had various books of Scripture which were written to meet and remove them. Had it not been for infidelity, the Evidences never would have been scrutinized so thoroughly, nor the truth advanced in so satisfactory a form as it now stands; and, had it not been for the violence of persecution, it is to be feared the primitive church would have kept the gospel to herself, and not gone forth, or at least not gone forth in so zealous and effective a spirit, for the conversion of the world. How different are God's ways from man's ways!—who would have thought of enlisting enemies in behalf of his cause?—but oftentimes their opposition has been overruled to do more good than all the zeal of friends. So vain is it for man to attempt to fight with God! It may be doubted whether, in various respects, Judas may not be a better witness in behalf of Christianity, than any of the faithful apostles. Without meaning to anticipate the statements of Mr BONAR's paper, I cannot better conclude these preliminary remarks than in the words of a recent and excellent article of the Rev. Dr Easdale of Perth, in the *Scottish Christian Herald*—a publication which cannot be too warmly encouraged, for its valuable services in behalf of Christianity. (Oct. 20, 1838.) Speaking of the apostles, he says:—

"Unbelievers can get the better of the evidence of the martyrs only by alleging that they were enthusiasts, and that the delusion which they had cherished through life, clung to them till the last moment of existence; but, if ever there was unimpeachable evidence in the world, it is that of Judas, who neither lived nor died a Christian—who died convicted but not converted—esteeming it a lighter evil to suffer punishment with kindred reprobate spirits, than to endure the righteous, the withering scorn of those with whom he had not a high sentiment in common, and whose holy hopes and virtuous feelings would have been gall and wormwood to his corrupted soul."

Again,—"In this then, we have a peculiar kind of evidence as strong if not stronger than that of the holy apostles, inasmuch as various reasons might be assigned for men adhering to opinions and statements which they had once openly avowed; decided boldness and the pride of consistency have often made men persist in statements which the world refuses to believe, though they scrupled not to die in confirmation of their word. Such scenes the world has wituessed; but, did we ever hear of any one who, having successfully maintained a falsehood for a long time, at last comes forward and declares the truth, and then puts himself to death, *because the world will not believe him?* Here, then, we have the evidence, not of an interested partisan, not of a visionary enthusiast, not of a weak and superstitious bigot, but we have the evidence of one whose interest it was to have believed the gospel to be a forgery, and whose character was concerned to prove it to be so. Yet the conscience of this hardened villain, which had carried him through so long, at last turned against him, and drove him to desperation at the recollection of his last and greatest crime."

SIR,—COULD I have forced you from that retirement, in which you studiously labour to conceal the fruits of an excellent genius and unwearied application, the following argument, of which you suggested the first hint, had appeared with superior strength and advantage. But, since all my endeavours to that purpose have been ineffectual, I have ventured to send abroad the result of my own reflections on that head, rather than that any thing, which tends to support Christianity, should remain unobserved in an age of so much scepticism and infidelity.

When you first mentioned the conduct of JUDAS as a proof of the Christian religion, the newness of the fancy struck me: for new it was to me. Nor can I yet find any one writer who has sufficiently attended to it;* though I must own, that the more I reflect upon it, the more am I convinced of its strength and solidity.

Nothing, perhaps, contributed more to the uncommon applause and success of Mr Lyttleton's late ingenious performance, than the compendiousness of his proof, and its depending entirely upon one chain of facts. But however favourable its reception, no man was surprised to find the apostle Paul adduced as an evidence for Christianity. But to find Judas Iscariot forced into the same service, will doubtless seem whimsical to some, and absurd to others; yet, as people generally allow the testimony of an enemy to be less suspicious than that of a friend, so possibly the setting this matter in a just light, may help to remove the prejudices of those who will credit nothing that comes from the friends of JESUS.

If ever there was an enemy to Christ in the world, Judas was that enemy; if ever there was an apostate from the faith, Judas was that apostate; and if ever there was a traitor, he too was the man. And yet to find this malicious, this traitorous, this apostate Judas, instead of disproving Christianity in any point, proving it in every one—sealing a testimony to the truth of it even with his blood, and giving solemn evidence against himself; this, sure, is a phenomenon pretty surprising, and what even the warmest friends of Christianity could scarce have expected. If the infidel suspects the integrity of Paul, let him now hear the testimony of Judas: if the one has no weight with him, surely the other will.

The following observations, therefore, claim a fair and dispassionate hearing. This is all the favour that they ask; and, it is hoped, it is all that they need.

As it is from the writings of the evangelists that we have any knowledge of the character and conduct of Judas Iscariot, we must beg leave to quote these as genuine records of the events they pretend to relate—an honour which I hope our adversaries will not deny them; or, if they should, they must be sensible, that as strong proof can be brought in favour of Luke and

* "The testimony of Judas is briefly touched upon by Dr Benson, in the *History of the Life of Jesus Christ*, and by Dr Craig, in his Essay on the same subject. In the *Theological Repository*, vol. iii. no. 2, is an Essay on the Character of Judas." See also vol. ii. no. 14."—Note to *Doddridge's Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 5.

the other New Testament writers, as of any who wrote at an equal distance of time.*

Taking this, therefore, for granted, I beg leave to transcribe what we find concerning Judas in these ancient records.

The first time Judas is mentioned in the New Testament, is when Christ chooses twelve from the multitude that attended his ministry, and appoints them to be apostles, or particular messengers, for propagating his religion. We have the catalogue of these apostles given us by three evangelists, who all conclude it with the name of "*Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.*"† Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 19; Luke vi. 16.

Some short time after, we find him, together with the other eleven, receiving from his great Master power over all unclean spirits, diseases, nay, death itself; and commissioned to go and preach the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. See Luke ix.

After this we hear nothing of him till a little before the third passover of Christ's public ministry, when many of his disciples left him, upon his declaring, in the synagogue of Capernaum, that he was the "bread of life, which came down from heaven." On this occasion Christ puts the question to the apostles, "Will ye also go away?" Whereupon they all reply by the mouth of Simon, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." In answer to which, Christ assures them, that although he had chosen them twelve, yet one of them was a "devil," or should prove his accuser; as the Greek word διάβολος literally signifies;‡ which the Evangelist assures us he spoke of Judas. John vi. 70.

The next time we find him spoken of, is on the Sabbath immediately preceding the passion-week; when Christ, being arrived at Bethany, is invited, with his disciples, to an entertainment in the house of Simon the leper.—During which entertainment a box of very precious ointment is poured out upon Christ's head. Upon which the historian remarks, that some present had indignation; and that Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, expressly said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? and this he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and *bare*§ what was put therein." John xii. 4; Matt. xxvi.; and Mark xiv.

On the third day of the passion-week, he entered into the infamous contract with the high-priest and rulers of the Jews, to deliver his Master into their hands. Of which the Evangelists give us this account:—

"Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, into the palace of the high-priest, who is also called Caiaphas; and consulted how they might take Jesus by subtilty, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people. Then entered Satan into Judas, sirnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve; and he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them; and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money; and covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And he promised; and from that time sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude." Compare Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; and Luke xxi.

Towards the evening of the fourth day of the passion-week, Jesus comes with his disciples from Bethany to Jerusalem; and having ordered the passover to be prepared, at the appointed time sits down to eat it with the twelve. During which solemnity, he takes occasion to let them know that he was thoroughly acquainted both with the treachery and the traitor. For, being troubled in spirit, he said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me; for the hand that betrayeth me, is with me on the table. Then the disciples were exceeding sorrowful, and looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake; and began every one by turns to say, Lord, is it I?—— Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom, one of the disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter, who probably sat on the other side of the table, therefore beckoned unto him, that he should ask who it was of whom he spoke. He then leaning himself down on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered with a low voice, so that none of the rest heard, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas; who, just as he was reaching out his hand to take it, says, "Lord, is it I?" To which Jesus replied, "Thou hast said." And immediately after the sop, Satan entered into him; and, fired with indignation, he rose from the table. Upon which Christ says, "What thou dost, do quickly." But none of the disciples, except John, seem to have known with what intent he said so. John xiii.

"After the paschal supper, and the institution of the eucharist, Jesus goes out with his disciples to a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives; a place Judas was well acquainted with, and where he knew his Master was to spend part of that night. Having therefore received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, he came thither with lanterns, torches, and weapons; and having given them this as a sign whereby they should know the person whom they were to apprehend, he goes up to Christ, and, kissing him, saith, 'Hail, Master.' Whereupon Jesus saith, 'Man, wherefore art thou come?—Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?' Upon which it appears that he shrunk back again amongst the crowd: for immediately, when Christ by a word strikes them all to the ground, it is observed that Judas also stood with them." John xviii.

"Jesus being thus taken, and next day condemned by Pilate to be crucified, Judas repented of what he had done, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood;' and, casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he went and hanged himself." Matt. xxvii.

Luke, in his history of the acts of the apostles, has added one circumstance more—that "falling headlong, Judas burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Acts i. 15.*

* See Conybeare's *Defence of Revealed Religion*, cap. 9; Campbell *On the Four Gospels*, vol. ii. p. 180, sect. 9; Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*.

† Here one cannot but be struck with the spirit of forbearance and charity in which the sacred writers speak of Judas. We might have expected, after his atrocious crime, and the deep dishonour which he had brought upon the whole company of the apostles, that they would have spoken of him with severity, and denounced him as a wretch and a villain. But there is nothing of this. They simply speak of him, to distinguish him from others, as the Judas who betrayed or delivered him up. What a change in the temper of the disciples, from the day when they would have called down fire from heaven, to consume a Samaritan village, because due respect had not been shown to their Master!—Editor.

‡ It is so used 1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 3; Titus ii. 3.

§ I have no doubt that the proper rendering of Ἐβάσταζεν is far stronger, and that it should be translated, *carried off*, or *stole* what was put therein. What a view does this give us of Christ's superiority to the world—that he gave the charge of all that he had of it to one whom he knew to be a *thief!* Little, surely, had he cared about the world!—Editor.

* It may be proper to observe, that amongst other instances from which Mr Tindal endeavours to overthrow the credit of the gospel history, this of the conduct of Judas is one.—*Christianity as Old as the Creation*, p. 245.

And it seems a little odd, that the learned Dr Conybeare, in his elaborate *Reply*, should leave his adversary in full possession of this objection; saying nothing in answer to it, but that it will be time enough to allege the miscarriages of Judas, when we build any thing on his evidence.—*Defence of Revealed Religion*, p. 416.

This is all the account that the Evangelists give of Judas: and the argument thence arising in favour of Christianity, seems to be this:—Here is a man of sense and ability, thoroughly acquainted with the most secret conduct and views of Jesus, and therefore capable to detect any fraud or imposture that might be carrying on by him; a man, not only able to inform against Jesus, but highly willing; engaged from principles of honour, interest, and self-preservation; tempted by reward, by avarice, by ambition, by resentment, to make the discovery; yet this man, after having delivered up Christ through the strength of these temptations, no sooner reflects on what he had done, than his conscience, taking the alarm, makes him in the strongest manner retract, and attest his Master's innocence, before those very rulers to whom he had sold him but a few hours ago; and finding all had no effect, in an excess of grief and remorse he expires almost in their very presence.——"I have sinned," cried he, "in that I have betrayed innocent blood:"—an attestation of the innocence of Christ, so circumstantiated, that it is scarce possible to suppose a stronger; and which nothing but the most thorough conviction could have extorted.

If by "innocent blood," Judas meant no more than that Christ was a person who had done nothing worthy of death, sure this is the very lowest sense in which the words can be taken. However, taking them no higher, they plainly seem to intimate,

1. That Judas believed that Jesus was the true Messiah, and Son of God, as he all along affirmed himself to be: for, otherwise, Christ could not have been a man of truth and veracity, if he laid claim to a character which in no ways belonged to him. In that case, too, he would have been guilty of blasphemy, and consequently worthy of death by the Jewish law.*

2. As he hereby declares his belief that Jesus was the true Messiah, so he in effect declares, that, in as far as he could discern, his miracles were all true, his doctrine Divine, and his life pure and holy: for it was from these things that he must have been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.

3. Judas hereby declares, that, for his part, he was privy to no design formed by Christ of erecting a temporal kingdom; otherwise he must have reckoned, that he ought to have suffered death, if not by the Jewish, at least by the Roman law.

4. By this expression, Judas strongly declares his opinion, that Christ was innocent of the crimes laid to his charge by the Sanhedrim; particularly, of deceiving the people by pretended miracles; stirring them up to sedition against Cæsar, saying, "that he himself was a king;" and casting out devils by magic, or Beelzebub the prince of the devils: and consequently, he hereby declares, in the strongest manner, his total and profound ignorance of those frauds and collusions, of which some quick-sighted modern Deists have made surprising discoveries.

But one is apt to think, that the words *innocent blood* imply somewhat more than all this. They seem to point out, that Judas was convinced, not only that Jesus was an innocent man, but a beneficent one; one constantly employed in doing good; and particularly, that he was a man remarkable for meekness of temper; of a merciful, compassionate, and harmless disposition; void of ambition, innocent, and quiet.

Now, if it can be made appear, that the person giving such a strong attestation to the innocence of Christ, was one well acquainted with his most secret views; was one able to form a just judgment of them; was one who would have been fond to find out and expose any fraud; and was one who could have no worldly interest to serve by adhering to Christ, but, on the contrary, had every inducement to detect his design: if, I say, these things can be made appear, will it not strongly conclude, that Jesus was what he professed himself to be, the true Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world?

This is an argument founded on the few simple facts above set down; which it requires no depth of thought to comprehend, and no abstract reasoning to discover. The consequence, I apprehend, is undeniable, provided the premises are able to support such a fabric. It must therefore be the business of the following pages, to examine these with becoming accuracy.

And here the leading inquiry will be, Whether the person giving such a strong attestation to the innocence of Jesus, in these peculiar circumstances, was one of sense and ability; able to form a just opinion of Christ and his designs? For unless we can be assured of his capacity, his testimony will have very little weight; since it is impossible to draw any argument from the freakish inconsistencies of conduct into which a man of a weak mind may run; whereas, when a man of sense changes his conduct, we are naturally led to inquire into the grounds upon which he proceeds.

We are not indeed able to trace out the birth and education of Judas, which lies in equal obscurity with that of the other apostles. He is called the son of Simon, and Judas Iscariot; but neither of these epithets give much light into the matter. They are probably added, to distinguish him from the other Judas, who was faithful to the death. Some have supposed him the son of Simon the leper, in whose house Jesus was so elegantly entertained a few days before he suffered. The ingenious Mr Fleming concludes him the son of Simon the Canaanite. But both opinions are merely conjectural; though either of them seems more probable than the fancy of those who will have him a native of Corcyra, where his house and posterity, say they, may yet be seen;* or the notion of the Cainites, who make him the head of a considerable family in the tribe of Issachar.†

I should not have mentioned these uncertain conjectures, did they not seem to intimate a general notion that prevailed very early in the church, that Judas was some considerable person; which I scarce know how to account for, but by supposing, that, by birth or education, he was somewhat conspicuous in the college of the apostles. For, why should the earliest writers, by a sort of general consent, in this manner aggrandize the traitor, while they speak of the other apostles in a different style?

As to his name Iscariot, some refer it to the office of purser, which he bore in Christ's family, from a Hebrew word of much the same sound, and correspondent meaning. But the opinion of those seems better founded, who, deriving it from the place of his birth, read Judas Ish-Carioth, *i. e.* Judas a man of Carioth, a small town beyond Jordan.‡

But it is much more to the present purpose to

* That Judas knew Christ to be the true Messiah, seems also evident from Matt. xxvi. 49, and Luke xxii. 48, where Christ says to him, upon receiving the treacherous kiss, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man?" *i. e.* the person whom thou knowest to be the Son of Man, or Messiah.* Which interpretation gives the words a force and spirit, which I have not seen attended to by any but the devout and learned Dr Doddridge.—*Family Expositor*, vol. ii. p. 507.

* It is worthy of notice, that when the question is put to Judas, he does not deny. He does not say, "No; I am not betraying the Son of Man; I am only exposing an unprincipled impostor." This would have been the time to vindicate himself and accuse Christ, had either been possible.—Editor.

* Petrus a Valle, in itineribus suis, pars 1. Turcicæ, epist. 1.

† Calmet's *Dictionary*, art. *Judas*.

‡ The different conjectures as to the meaning and derivation of the name, may be seen in Bartolocci Bib. Rab. tom. 3. p. 24.

observe, that this person was made choice of by Jesus to be one of his apostles and constant attendants; which will sufficiently warrant our concluding him a man of good natural sense and ability.* For although Christ made choice of men in low life to be his apostles; yet I can see no reason why we must conclude them fools too, unless we will say that good sense is only to be found among the sons of learning and fortune. So that Judas being of the number of the apostles, gives a strong presumption in his favour; since there is the very best reason to conclude them all men of sound minds and good understandings, though not brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.

To this we must add, that Judas was raised by Christ to a sort of superior station in the family. He was appointed treasurer; a place which would doubtless be given to the man of greatest activity, and acquaintance with the world. In this office he not only had the custody of what presents were made to Jesus and his disciples, which required a person of reputed honesty; but also he had the laying out of that money for their daily maintenance and support, which called for a man of activity and discretion. Nay, it appears, that to him Jesus had been in the practice of leaving the distributions for the poor; which supposes a high opinion of his judgment and prudence—qualifications essentially necessary to the prudent conferring of charity.

And if we may build any thing upon the opinion of those who had best access to know him, his fellow-disciples and apostles, he seems to have been in no small repute among them: for when the plainest intimations were given by Christ, as we have seen above, that one of them should betray him, nay, that Judas was the person, yet no man suspected him; which doubtless would have been the case, had they judged him either a deceitful or a weak man, capable of acting such a base and dishonourable part.

The manner, too, in which he conducted the treachery from first to last, gives no bad specimen of his abilities.

That he commenced a disciple of Jesus from worldly views and prospects, will scarce be denied. With the rest of the Jews of that time, he had long expected the promised Messiah, hoping to find him a temporal monarch, who should rescue their nation from the oppression of the Romans, and raise it to the highest pitch of grandeur.——The fame of Jesus had reached his ears; and possibly the miracle wrought on the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, made him conclude that certainly he must be the person; for it is soon after this miracle that he is numbered with the apostles.†

As these views made him commence a disciple, the same views soon made him resolve to abandon that way. Covetousness was the reigning passion of his soul. He found in Christ's family nothing to gratify it, nor any prospect of the matter mending in that respect; and therefore he resolved to abandon his new profession, but in such a way as he might make something by the bargain. Knowing the hatred of the Jewish rulers to his Master, he resolved to deliver him into their hands, hoping they would generously reward such a service. But, that he might make the most possible of his treachery, he resolved to delay the execution of it, until there should be something considerable in the bag; which he shrewdly enough conjectured might be the case, when his Master should go up to Jerusalem to the passover; where the very sacrifices they were to offer, and the other necessary expenses, would require a larger stock than was necessary in their country retirement.* And this, I think, will naturally account for delaying the execution of his design so long after he had formed it; for it is beyond all question, from the plain intimations that our Lord gives long before of the intended treachery, that there was such a design in head.†

But however Judas had formed such a design, he so artfully concealed it, that none but the All-searching eye could penetrate the disguise. Often do the other disciples betray their expectations of a worldly kingdom; but we never hear a syllable to this purpose drop from the lips of Judas. Two forward disciples may pray down fire from heaven, to consume the Samaritans, who would not receive and honour their Lord; but Judas discovers no such imprudent zeal. The sons of Zebedee may solicit to sit, one on the right hand and the other on the left, in his kingdom; but Judas betrays no such ambitious weakness. And when we find him reproving Mary for anointing Jesus, it is under the specious pretence of giving to the poor. As to the perpetrating the treachery, how artfully is it managed! His agreement with the priests is privately made, and the most private opportunity taken to put it in execution. Nay, when he gave the treacherous kiss, he seems to have hoped to pass undiscovered. He came in the dark, went at some distance before the multitude, and afterwards mingled with the crowd. In short, a design could not have been better laid, more artfully carried on, or cautiously executed, than this of Judas betraying Christ; which shows him master of no small address and cunning.

I might conclude this head, with observing, that to his natural sagacity there was added superior powers by Jesus, when he sent him out with the other apostles, and gave him power over all unclean spirits,‡ diseases, and death itself; from which moment he must be considered as a person endued in a very extraordinary manner.

So that, upon the whole, the first observation made, viz., That Judas was a man of sense and ability, and sufficiently able to judge if Christ was carrying on any fraud, is abundantly evident.

But as this is the basis upon which all the subsequent argument rests, I must not dismiss it till I have obviated one objection that seems to lie against this part of Judas' character, as a man of sense and sagacity; and that is, his selling his master for such a trifle as thirty pieces of silver, little more than L.3 15s., or, according to Dean Prideaux, L.4. 10s. of our money: which seems rather to represent him as a greedy fool, who knew not how to make use of the opportunities which offered of gratifying his covetousness; as none can doubt but that the Jewish rulers would have given a much greater sum rather than allowed Jesus to have escaped them.

* That the apostles were men of superior sense to the bulk of people in their station, will scarce be denied by the Deists; who, upon that very supposition, build all the phenomena of Christianity, which, according to them, was contrived by Jesus Christ and these twelve cunning impostors.

† It appears from the history, that Christ did not make choice of the twelve till some weeks after the second passover; for, though there is mention made of his calling Philip, Nathanael, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, long before, yet it was only at the above period that they were appointed to be apostles, or messengers.

* For it is pretty evident, that the apostles never attended Christ to Jerusalem till the last passover. They were not appointed till after the second passover: our Lord went not up to the third: so that this fourth was the first they attended in company with him. And it is probable, that our Lord did not choose to appear with such a retinue until his time should be fully come; that so he might not too much alarm the Jewish rulers.

† See *Apostolic Constitutions*, book 5. chap. 14, where we find these words, Εκ πολλου μεν διαστρεψεως.

‡ It seems to me an excessive refinement, to distinguish unclean spirits from other evil spirits which might possess men, supposing the word only to signify such kind of spirits as drove men to dwell among tombs, by which they became ceremoniously unclean; for it is evident, that unclean and evil spirits are generally used as synonymous, referring to the moral impurity and malignity of their natures. Compare Matt. xii. 13; Luke xi. 24; and Rev. xvi. 13. 14.

I frankly own, that there has been no part of his conduct for which I have found it so difficult to account, as this. Once I was in hopes of finding, that a piece of money might be applied to other coins as well as to the shekel, so that the sum might be greater than what interpreters generally fix it. And in this I thought myself not a little supported, by what the Evangelist assures us, that with that money they were able to purchase a field in Jerusalem for a burying-place to strangers. But I am now convinced, that it is not to be accounted for in this way. For,

1. I cannot find, that a piece of silver, or a silvering, is ever applied to any Jewish coin but to the shekel; whereas to that it is very often applied in the Old Testament.

2. Nor would increasing the value of the pieces of silver at all agree with what we find in the prophet Zechariah concerning this very transaction, of the price given by the Jews for Jesus; where the thirty pieces of silver given to the prophet as his hire, is spoken of as a sign of the contempt in which they held him and his services.* A goodly price (says he) at which they have valued me. It was the very price which a slave was to give for his liberty, and at which slaves were bought among them.

3. And as to the purchasing a field with these thirty pieces of silver, which seems to intimate a much greater sum; it may not be difficult to account for that, especially if we grant the place which is at present shown to travellers, to be the very spot; for it is not above thirty yards long, and fifteen broad.† And when the Evangelist calls it the potter's field, he gives us a reason why it might be such a cheap purchase, as having been employed formerly in making and burning earthenware, it must have been marred for any valuable use.

For these reasons, I apprehend we cannot reasonably increase the value of the thirty pieces of silver; but must endeavour to account for Judas' conduct in selling his Master for such a trifle, in some other way. And to this the history itself seems to give us a key. For, however covetousness might have been the reigning passion of his soul, yet it is very evident, that resentment pushed him on to the immediate execution of his design. He judged himself affronted by Jesus, when at the last supper he pointed him out as the ungrateful person who was to betray him. The discovery seems to have exasperated him to the last degree: for he instantly sprung from the table; and, leaving the room, went directly to the chief priests, to conclude the infamous bargain about which he had formerly treated with them. And if we attend to the then temper of his mind, we shall find the part which he acted, a natural consequence of covetousness and resentment. His covetousness would not allow him to give up Jesus for nought; whereas, on the other hand, his resentments were so keen and pungent, that he had not coolness enough to make the most advantageous bargain, but impatient for revenge, accepted what they offered. For which this further reason may be assigned, That, as his design was now known, he must either immediately accept of the offer that had been made him, otherwise the opportunity was for ever lost. And as for the Jewish rulers offering no higher a bait, it may naturally enough be accounted for, from that contempt in which they professed to hold Christ and his adherents; whereas had they offered a much greater sum, it would have convinced others, that these very rulers judged him more formidable than they were willing to own. Wherefore, I cannot see, that from this part of his history any objection can be brought against what was formerly alleged in favour of his sense and sagacity.*

But it will not be sufficient to our present purpose, that Judas was a man of good understanding, perfectly capable of penetrating into the most secret designs of Jesus and his disciples, unless we can also show, that he had sufficient opportunities of informing himself as to these. This therefore, in the second place, must be canvassed and examined.

Various reasons have been assigned by those who comment upon Christ's life and history, for his making choice of Judas to be an apostle, while yet he was thoroughly acquainted with the badness and insincerity of his heart; as if he thereby intended to teach us only to judge by the external conduct: that ordinances derive not their virtue and efficacy from the administrator; and that even in the purest societies upon earth we must expect a mixture of good and bad men.

These indeed are pious instructions; but they seem far from containing the whole of the case. The scheme now under consideration, suggests, in my apprehension, a still more important reason, namely, that by choosing Judas into his family, who should afterwards prove a traitor, Christ would show the world, that he was not afraid to have his most secret conduct witnessed by his enemies; and lest they should suspect that there was some fraud privately carrying on, he would venture to initiate one of their own party into all the mysteries of his religion: a conduct which, I dare say, every man must be convinced, stands clear of the least suspicion of imposture.

I apprehend it will readily be granted, that, upon the supposition that Jesus was carrying on a fraud, this could not have been done without accomplices. It was an imposture of that nature, as could not have been managed by one man alone. Jesus aspired to nothing lower than being thought the Messiah; in consequence whereof he not only pretended to work miracles himself, but to give the power of doing so to others.

Now, if accomplices were necessary, none, I dare say, will be thought so proper for this purpose as the twelve apostles; nay, our adversaries will not scruple to grant that these were the very persons. They were pitched upon from the whole multitude of his disciples, to be stated and constant attendants upon him; they were present at his public teachings; they were the companions of his most private hours: so that if he held any esoteric or secret opinion, if he carried on any private design which he artfully disguised from the world, it must certainly have been known to them.

Judas was one of this number; and, by the whole of the history, appears to have been admitted into as great confidence and familiarity as the other apostles. And, however it may be pretended that the eleven, deeply tinctured with enthusiasm, might easily be imposed upon; yet this cannot be alleged of Judas, who afterwards made it evident, that he had never so fully entered into their designs. Free then from this bias, with all his senses alert, nay, as will appear, with the design of quitting their party full in his eye, and therefore watching every occasion against them; was he not able to discover in their most free and private conversation the bottom of the plot? Must he not have known whether Jesus lived as he taught; or if, while he recommended the strictest morality to others, he

* Zech. xi. 12. Ignatii epist. ad Philip. ὃν ἐτιμησάντο ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. This whole prophecy is set in a very clear light, in Dr Doddridge's *Family Expositor*, vol. ii. p. 260.

† Maundrel's Travels, p. 101.

* To these considerations it may be added, that the smallness of the sum was matter of prophecy, intended, in the providence of God, to exhibit the contempt in which his beloved Son was held by men, and that, moreover, avarice is proverbially blind and inconsistent.—EDITOR.

indulged himself in any private crimes? which would certainly have been the case had he been an impostor.

To which I must add one very strong consideration on this head, of Judas' opportunities of knowing if any fraud was carrying on by Christ and his disciples; and that is, that Christ not only pretended to work miracles himself, but also pretended to give the same power to his disciples: "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases: and they departed, and went through the towns preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere." And lest we should suspect that Judas was not so highly endued, the evangelist Matthew takes care, immediately after this commission, to subjoin a complete catalogue of the apostles who received these powers, in which Judas is particularly mentioned.

Judas heard his Master pretend to give him such powers; and, in consequence thereof, he goes and makes the experiment on the first diseased person he meets. Must he not then immediately have known whether the effect followed, and whether the lame and the blind received their sight and strength? If he saw this undeniably the case, what a strong conviction must it have wrought in his mind that his Master was the Messiah? And how naturally does it account for that anguish he afterwards endured, upon his basely betraying him? Whereas, on the other hand, had Judas discovered all to be trick, had he discovered that the pretended cures were only the effect of a collusion betwixt the persons who feigned the disease and Christ, would he have failed to lay open the cheat? Especially if we add, that in case there was any fraud carrying on by Jesus and his disciples, Judas had every supposable inducement to make the discovery: which, joined to what has already been said of his knowledge and opportunities, will, in my apprehension, go a great way to make the argument conclusive.

This will hold true, whatever the personal character of Judas is supposed to be. Was he a man of conscience and honesty, who waited for the consolation of Israel, and had commenced a disciple of Jesus, in hopes of finding in him the long-wished-for Messiah; we may easily be convinced what part he would have acted, upon finding his hope disappointed, and that, instead of a prophet, he was following an impostor. Regard to truth, and the glory of God, would not have allowed him to hesitate one moment. He must not only have abandoned the party himself, but have fairly laid open their frauds and secret practices to others. Regardless of whatever reflection the dishonest or unthinking part of mankind might throw upon him, as having once been of the party, he would labour to undeceive the multitude, and wish to confront the impostor himself.

Regard to the religion of his country would greatly have strengthened such a resolution. It is well known how zealous the bulk of the Jews were on this head; which alarmed them the more at the pretensions of Jesus to be the Messiah, while his doctrine tended so evidently to set aside their numerous rites and ceremonies: so that, as a good son of the church, Judas would have been led to use the utmost care to prevent the dangerous infection.

All the principles of benevolence and love to mankind would have awaked in his breast, in order to induce him to a speedy discovery, that so others might be prevented from falling into the snare in which he was well nigh caught. And this too would he have judged the best return of gratitude to that God who had saved him from being entirely led aside by the error of the wicked.

In fine, to such a speedy discovery he would have been strongly excited by the powerful motive of love to his country.———It was one reason why the more politic Jews gave so little regard to the various circumstances that concurred to prove Jesus the Messiah, lest by seeming to acknowledge any other king than Cæsar, they should give a handle to the Romans, under whose yoke they lay, to take away their city and nation. The force of which argument was the greater, as they could not yet have forgot the many inconveniences which two pretenders to that character had brought upon them a few years before: instances, which, as they happened in Judas' own time, must have been more than enough to overbalance any argument that might be brought to the contrary by the false shame of commencing informer.

By such views and motives must Judas have been actuated, had Jesus been an impostor, and he a man of integrity and conscience.

But supposing, what indeed is the fact, that this Judas was a man of a very opposite character, was an abandoned wretch, destitute of honour, conscience, and love to his country; yet, even in that case, interest, powerful private interest, must soon have determined him to make a discovery of the fraud, if any such was carrying on.

A man of such a character must certainly have commenced disciple from worldly views, concluding that Christ was to erect a temporal kingdom. He hoped, by joining him so early, to merit the highest preferments in that future monarchy. But finding himself disappointed, and that there was neither honour, riches, nor fame to be got in his service; nay, that the very Master himself seemed, by some unaccountable conduct, always to decline any advantages that were thrown in his way, and whimsically talked of a spiritual kingdom; observing this to be the case, would not rage at his disappointment naturally lead him to divulge the secret? which, too, would have been a sufficient apology for abandoning a sect which he had once espoused.

If covetousness was the chief bent of his mind, this was most likely to be gratified by a discovery. He knew how inveterate the chief priests and rulers were against Jesus, and with what malice and keenness they sought his ruin: so that he might reasonably expect to be well paid for what discovery he should make to them.

Nor can it be alleged that such a discovery would either have subjected him to odium or danger.

To odium or reproach it could never have exposed him with any man of sense and reflection; for his discovering such a fraud, stood justified by every motive and consideration which can have weight in such a case. So that instead of reproach, his uncommon honesty would have merited universal applause. Nay, we may go one step farther, and affirm, that the applauses which he merited would have been liberally conferred upon him; immediately he must have become the darling of all the rulers; and this fully obviates the other part of the objection, That possibly he might have been deterred through fear from making the discovery. But of whom, pray, was he to be afraid? Of Jesus and his followers? A very inconsiderable party indeed, without either number, power, or influence; who, so far from being able to injure others, could not even defend themselves.

Ere I dismiss this head, it will be proper to add, that the manner in which Jesus all along treated his followers, and the apostles themselves, makes it evident, that he was never afraid of what discoveries they could make.

It is the interest of every impostor, not only to gain

partisans, but also to manage those whom he may have gained with the utmost delicacy and address, lest, forsaking his party, they should work his ruin: an observation which stands confirmed by the practice of all impostors that have yet appeared in the world. But instead of this address and management, we find Jesus always treating his disciples with the greatest plainness and freedom. When two of them, incensed at the conduct of the Samaritans, would have prayed down fire from heaven upon those despisers of their Master, instead of applauding their zeal, Jesus tells them, that they knew not what spirits they were of. How oft in presence of the multitude, does he blame the twelve for their dulness and incredulity? And when, from the tenderest affection, Peter had declared himself unwilling to hear of his sufferings and death, he receives the sharp rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not of the things which be of God."

But not to insist on these, and many instances of the same kind which occur in the gospel with regard to the other disciples, let us observe the behaviour of Jesus towards this very Judas, and we shall find it such as naturally tended to irritate and provoke him to a discovery, if he had any discovery to make.

If Judas had conceived a design of betraying his Master some considerable time before he put it into execution, we find Jesus speaking of it even then as a thing he was well acquainted with. "Behold, I have chosen you twelve, and one of you shall prove my accuser." This he repeats at sundry times. And though, as afterwards appears, he was as well acquainted with the person of the traitor, as the treachery in general; yet he by no means observes any particular delicacy of conduct towards him. When he was to be transfigured, he keeps him back from the honour of that glorious transaction. When this Judas animadverts upon Mary's anointing his Master's feet, we find Jesus soon silencing him, by openly vindicating the woman, and condemning the reflection thrown out against her. But as if all this had not been sufficient, at the last paschal supper, we find him pointed out by Jesus as the ungrateful monster who, though he dipped with him in the dish, should in a few hours betray him. Then too does he hear the most dreadful judgments denounced against himself, which immediately filled his mind with the keenest desires of revenge; so that in fury he springs from the table. But Jesus, instead of being alarmed at this, as he must certainly have been had not all his conduct been fair and honest, puts him, as it were, to the defiance; bids him go do what he intended; and that, instead of flying from him, he would even so far countenance his design as to retire to the private garden of Gethsemane, a place with which the traitor was well acquainted, and where he might apprehend him without disturbance.

To all which I may add, that, knowing the covetous temper of Judas, he had before committed the bag to him, that he might always have it in his power to run off with advantage.

Now, let any man say if he discerns ought in such a conduct that can give the least suspicion of imposture? Nay, does not the fair and open part which Jesus acts, strongly argue the contrary?

Thus I have endeavoured to show, that Judas was thoroughly acquainted with the most secret designs of Jesus; that he had sufficient capacity to discover any fraud that might be carrying on; and that he had all possible inducements to lead him to make such a discovery: so that it only remains that we inquire in fact what part this Judas acted.

Does he, in consequence of having got to the bottom of the plot, go to the rulers of the Jews, and make the discovery? Sure, nothing could have so much ingratiated him into their favour. Such a discovery would have been of far greater importance to them than the death of the impostor. Hereby should they have been enabled effectually to oppose his designs, and ruin his credit with the people. Hereby should they have been furnished with a just ground of accusation against him; an accusation not founded on matters of doubtful disputation, or questions of their law, but on the reason of things—on common justice and equity.

This too would have most successfully gratified Judas' revenge against Christ, and fully exonerate him in forsaking a party he had once espoused.

How wide of this was the part he acted! From covetousness and revenge he resolves to deliver his Master into the hands of the Jewish priests. This resolution he executes in the manner above mentioned: yet he has not the effrontery to allege any one crime of which he was guilty; although I think it pretty evident from the history, that the Jewish Sanhedrim had examined Judas very particularly about Jesus—about his miracles, his doctrine, and his predictions; and that he had told them every thing he knew about these.*

Had Judas made any discoveries to the prejudice of Christ, which no doubt he would have done, had he been able, it would not long have remained a secret. Our Lord had been twitted with it at his trial; it had been thrown up to Judas when he came, saying, "I have betrayed innocent blood;" and it would have been objected to his apostles afterwards when brought to a trial for propagating the same religion. But in none of these cases was there the least insinuation to this purpose; but, on the contrary, after all they could expiscate, we find them entirely at a loss how to lay their accusation against Christ, or how to prove it even after it was laid.

And as for Judas, no sooner does he see what the consequences of his treachery would be, and that the Jews were actually proceeding to put Christ to death, than his conscience takes the alarm, and drives him in despair to be his own executioner. For it is the same thing as to the present argument, whether, according to our translation, we make Judas to have hanged himself, or, as the Greek words might be rendered, that, falling down on his face, he was suffocated through the excess of his grief, and burst asunder in the middle. Only, if we take this last to be the fact, it is worth observing, that the Talmudists make such a suffocation the punishment which God was wont to inflict on such persons as bore false witness against their neighbour.†

Now, let any man attempt to account rationally for this excess of grief and remorse, upon the supposition that Jesus was an impostor, and that Judas knew him to be such. In which case, his discovery would have stood justified by the most rational arguments, and no foundation could have been laid for such anguish of mind. But allowing the fact as it stands, and this to have been the end of Judas, does it not strongly conclude, that after Judas, a man of sense and ability, had been thoroughly acquainted with Christ's life and doctrine, and for a considerable time had watched

* It seems probable, that it was Judas who informed the Sanhedrim of what Christ had said about his resurrection on the third day; otherwise, I cannot see how they came to be so distinctly informed about it, as they tell Pilate they were; for, so far as I can recollect, Christ never spoke of his resurrection plainly to any but the apostles.

† What it was that drove Judas to despair, rather than to ask forgiveness of this meek and merciful Lamb of God, I shall not determine. But it seems to me evident, that two things contributed greatly to it:—1st. A conviction that he had betrayed the true Messiah; and 2dly. A remembrance of those awful warnings that Christ had formerly given him. "The Son of Man," saith Christ, "goeth, as it is written of him; but wo unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed: good were it for that man that he had never been born."

every occasion against him, and at last, from covetousness and revenge, had delivered him into the hands of his enemies; yet he was firmly persuaded that Jesus was an innocent person, and the true Messiah; whose religion we are bound to receive as a revelation sent from God.

Having thus observed the consequences of Judas' treachery with regard to himself, it may not be improper, before I shut up the argument, to show what influence it had on Jesus and his apostles.

As to Jesus himself, I am persuaded every man who reads the gospels, must be charmed with his behaviour in this last period of his life. Whether Jesus was the Messiah or not, this will be allowed, that he was one betrayed by a pretended friend; than which, no circumstance can tend more to sour the mind, and ruffle the temper, and every one must know what bitter reproaches such traitors receive, and ought to receive. But Jesus, superior to all trials, meets this horrid treachery with a heroic fortitude, and reproaches the traitor in no harsher terms than these, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

As to the disciples of Jesus, especially the eleven, notwithstanding this horrid treachery of one of their number, and the crucifixion of their Master which happened thereupon; yet they continue firmly united in carrying on the design of Christ, and establishing his religion in the world; which it was impossible for them to do had they been carrying on a fraud, or aggrandizing an impostor. For the case is the same here as in common life. If any twelve persons were engaged in a conspiracy, and one of them should go and discover the plot, this would at once put an end to the designs of the other eleven, and render it impossible for them any longer to carry them into execution. That union and harmony which is the very soul of combination, would henceforward be broken; and to that would succeed a mutual jealousy and distrust, every one suspecting that his neighbour might also become a traitor. The same must have been the case with the disciples of Jesus, had they not been entirely honest in their views. But as they were only adhering to truth, neither the treachery of Judas, nor the denial of Peter, in the least influenced them to abandon the cause in which they were engaged.

Thus I have endeavoured to state an argument in favour of Christianity from the conduct and character of Judas the traitor. I have examined it with all the attention I am capable of, and have endeavoured to show that it is conclusive: though I am far from laying the stress of the whole cause upon it. No; blessed be God, we have a cloud of witnesses attesting the innocence of Jesus, and the truth of our holy religion, upon which all our hopes for time and eternity are founded; witnesses whose characters have been canvassed, and their evidence illustrated, not only by those of former times, but also by the most masterly writers of this and the preceding age, laymen as well as clergy.* Against whom, I may safely say, the advocates for infidelity have maintained a very unequal conflict; since, notwithstanding their keenest efforts for these hundred years, they have not been able to weaken the smallest pillar by which the noble fabric stands supported.

Would to God I could say, that they had succeeded no better against the life and practice of religion. As a heart-love to wickedness is at the bottom of their opposition to the gospel, their impiety has still kept pace with their infidelity; and, as the most effectual way to debauch our principles, they have laboured hard to debauch our practice: and what melancholy success they have had in this respect, every one who hath eyes or ears can tell. While on the other hand, many of the friends of Christianity have been more careful to preserve our principles, than to reform our lives. But, sure it is now high time to awake, and to stand in the gap against impiety, as well as infidelity. Nor can we hope with success to discourage the latter, unless we shall be able to suppress the former. For so long as men are vicious, they will have a strong propensity to throw off those restraints which Christianity would lay upon their passions, and free themselves from that dread which it naturally inspires into the wicked.—I am,

Sir,

Your's &c.

* Besides the observations on the conversion of St Paul, already referred to, I have in mine eye Mr West's elegant and striking remarks on the evidences of Christ's resurrection, and the present Bishop of London's (Sherlock) *Trial of the Witnesses*—a book which, I am persuaded, will stand the test of ages, notwithstanding the ungenteel insinuation which Dr Middleton has lately thrown out against it.

THE SUCCESS

OF

THE FIRST PUBLISHERS OF THE GOSPEL

A

PROOF OF ITS TRUTH.

BY

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PASSING from the striking testimony of Judas, who, I have no doubt, was placed in the Saviour's family for the express purpose of being able afterwards to bear witness that there was not the most distant approach to collusion, or fraud, or vice, in any part of his proceedings, even the most secret and confidential; let us now turn to the consideration of the testimony of the apostles, as a whole. We have heard the evidence of a prejudiced enemy, let us now hear the evidence of honest and impartial friends. This and many other important considerations, are brought out in a very able statement by the late Rev. Dr CAMPBELL of Aberdeen, entitled, the *Success of the First Publishers of the Gospel, a Proof of its Truth.* The publication, appearing in the form of an Annual Sermon before the *Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge*, is little known. Its excellence, however, is such as to merit universal circulation. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader, that Dr CAMPBELL was one of the most acute and learned men of a period in the history of Scotland eminent for intellectual power and accomplishment. He was the celebrated antagonist of Hume, and published a most conclusive work in answer to his objection to the Scripture miracles; besides many others, which give him a first place among the scholars and philosophers of his native, or of any other country. Hume, in a letter written after Dr CAMPBELL's publication, expresses himself in a way which leaves no room to doubt that he *felt himself* defeated, though he does not acknowledge this in as many words. Perhaps too much ado has been made about Hume's objections to miracles. It is certain, however, that they have drawn forth a crowd of most able defenders, and none more original or successful than the Rev. Dr Chalmers, in his recent volumes on the Evidences. The objection, that miracles do not admit of proof, is not new. It was from a Jesuit that Hume first picked it up. It appears from Richard Baxter's work on the Evidences, published in 1655, that one Clement Writer of Worcester, a fanatical Seeker, of the age of the Commonwealth, had previously started the very same objection on which Hume afterwards prided himself so much. As soon as propounded, it was demolished by Baxter. The Rev. Dr Duff of Calcutta stated, a few years ago, that the same metaphysical objections were urged by some of the young Hindoos attending the General Assembly's Institution, though they had never heard of Hume or his works. The invention of Infidelity, it would seem, does not embrace, with all its boasting, a very comprehensive field. But I must not detain the reader from the present work of Dr CAMPBELL, which as conclusively shows, that miracles *must have been* wrought in the primitive times of Christianity, as his other work shows that in themselves, miracles are perfectly credible.

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"THE human and natural means originally employed for the propagation of the gospel, would, without the Divine interposition, have proved both foolish and weak, and therefore utterly incapable of answering the purpose. The purpose was nevertheless by these means fully answered. Consequently they must have been accompanied with the Divine interposition, and our religion is of God, and not of man." I shall first endeavour to evince the truth of the first proposition, and show the utter inability of the natural means employed in promulgating the gospel, to effect the end. I shall next evince the truth of the second, pointing out the rapid and unexampled success of the means that were employed.

I begin with the unfitness of the means, that is, the natural and ordinary means, admitted by infidels, as well as Christians, to have been employed; for it is of such means only I am here speaking. Let it be observed, that under this I comprehend the genius of the doctrine taught; because, whether supernatural in its origin or not, it may have in it a natural fitness for engaging attention and regard; or, on the contrary, a natural tendency to alienate the minds of men, and render them inattentive and averse. In this view the spirit and character of the institution itself ought to be regarded as natural means, either of promoting, or of retarding, its propagation. Let us then examine briefly the two principal circumstances already suggested, the doctrine, and the publishers. It is to the

former that the term *foolishness* is more especially applied, as *weakness* is to the latter.

The doctrine of the cross, in particular, the great hinge of all, was, in every view, exposed to universal dislike and derision. Considered as an article of faith in this new religion, as exhibiting the expiation of sin, and consequently as the foundation of the sinner's hope of Divine pardon and acceptance, to men principled as they were, it both shocked their understanding, and was humiliating to their pride. Considered as a practical lesson, and a warning of the treatment which the disciples might expect, when such horrible things had befallen their Master, to follow whom in suffering they were specially called, nothing could tend more powerfully to alienate their will, being opposed by all their most rooted passions, love of life, aversion to pain, and horror of infamy. And even considered only as a memorable event in the history of Him whom all the proselytes to this institution were bound to acknowledge as their Lawgiver and King, it was exceedingly disgustful, being contradictory to all the notions to which from infancy they had been habituated, in regard to the protection of Providence, and the marks whereby Heaven distinguishes its favourites destined for honour and authority.

Paul, accordingly, takes particular notice of the bad reception which this doctrine met with from both Jews and Gentiles, in consequence of the inveterate prejudices entertained against it. "The preaching of the cross," says he, "is to them that perish," to them who reject and despise the gospel, "foolishness; but to us who are saved," who by faith give it a grateful reception, "it is the power of God."* However much the Jews and the Greeks differed from each other, in their religious principles, as well as customs, they concurred in a most hearty detestation of this, which made so fundamental an article of the Christian dispensation. They viewed it differently, according to their different national characters; but the effect, an indignant rejection, was the same in both. Our apostle, who perfectly understood the difference, has marked it with the greatest accuracy. "The Jews require a sign," an evidence of the interposition of Omnipotence, which may overpower their minds, and command an unlimited assent; "and the Greeks seek after wisdom," the elaborate productions of oratory and ingenuity, which may at once convince their reason, and gratify their curiosity: "but we preach Christ crucified;" a doctrine so far from suiting the inclinations of either, that "to the Jews it is a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." Both agree to reprobate this doctrine, but differently according to their different tempers. To the Hebrew, it is an object of abhorrence; to the Grecian, of contempt. He adds, "but to them who are called," those who are divinely instructed, "both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."†

Nor can we justly wonder that so strange a doctrine as this of the cross, so repugnant to flesh and blood, should, upon the trial, prove so unwelcome to carnal men. If we inquire but ever so little, into the circumstances of the case, we shall find, that its reception could not have been any other than it was. The Jewish nation was at that time split into sects, which in many things entertained opinions opposite to one another. Nevertheless, all who expected the Messiah, of whatever sect, concurred in the belief that he would be, what the world calls, an illustrious prince, a mighty conqueror, who would subdue kingdoms, and establish for himself a new universal monarchy, or secular empire (for of a spiritual kingdom they had no idea), wherein his own nation would be exalted above all the nations of the earth. From these sentiments, the Samaritans (however much they differed from the Jews in other respects) seem not to have dissented; in these sentiments all our Lord's disciples had been brought up; and to these sentiments, in spite of the manifest tendency of his instructions and example, they, by their own account, firmly adhered during his life, and even for some time after his resurrection. Nor do they seem ever to have relinquished these sentiments, till the descent of the Holy Ghost, after the ascension, on that memorable day of Pentecost, on which the promulgation of the evangelical economy may properly be said to have commenced.

But it is not enough to say that the Messiah held forth to this people in the gospel, and that which the glosses and traditions of the Rabbis had taught them to expect, were personages widely different. They were, in most respects, the reverse of one another. The people had not yet learnt, that God, though not in the tempest, the earthquake, nor the thunder, may yet be found in the small and feeble voice. Their heads were occupied with ideas of grandeur and majesty merely human. When they were thinking of the royal palace, their attention was called to the shop of the artificer. "Is not this the carpenter?"* say they, with a mixture of astonishment and contempt. Instead of riches and splendour, behold poverty and humility: for a potentate and warrior, they had only a peaceful citizen. In lieu of one whose undertakings were, in the sight of all mankind, to be crowned with glory and success, they were presented with a man incessantly haunted by misfortune from his cradle to his grave; whose friends were few, and enemies innumerable; one, who in their eyes, had nothing desirable; or, to adopt the expression of the prophet, had "no form nor comeliness;"† one who accordingly, from his first appearance in public, was by all the men of power and influence, hated, derided, defamed, persecuted, dishonoured, and at last cruelly murdered. But the stone which the builders rejected, soon became the head of the corner.

Prosperity and adversity have, in all ages, and in all nations, had some influence on the judgments of men, in regard to Divine favour and aversion; but on no nation had these external things a greater influence than on the Jewish; and under no dispensation or form of religion, true or false, more glaringly, than under the Mosaic. There was something in that institution, it must be acknowledged, which naturally led the attention to these outward distinctions between man and man. The promises and threatenings of the law, interpreted according to the letter, are of things merely temporal. That under these are couched the eternal things of the gospel, is not to be denied; things which were also typified by the established ceremonies and carnal ordinances. But it must be observed, that the literal is the most obvious sense; the spiritual was perceived by those only whose faith or spiritual discernment put them in a capacity of seeing through the veil of symbolical language and ritual observances. For it ever did, and ever will hold, that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."‡ But in regard to the generality of the people (I may almost say the whole, the exceptions are so few), that outward happiness or misery were the standard by which they determined whether a person were the object of the love or of the hatred of heaven, is a fact that might be evinced, if necessary, from numberless passages, both of the Old Testament and of the New. And if this holds in regard to what may be called the general tenor of a man's life, it holds more especially of his death. To be adjudged to the death of a male-

* 1 Cor. i. 18. † 1 Cor. i. 22—24.

* Mark vi. 3. † Isa. liii. 2. ‡ Psal. xxv. 14.

factor by the supreme tribunal of the chosen people, they considered as an infallible mark of reprobation. How much more, when the very sort of death, suspension upon a tree, had a special malediction pronounced on it, which, as an indelible stigma, had been engrossed in the body of their law? "He that is hanged is accursed of God."* The Jews, accordingly to this day, distinguish our Saviour by the name of THE HANGED MAN, as the most disgraceful they can employ. We cannot then wonder, that to those whose minds were blinded through sensual affection and obdurate prejudices, and in respect of whom, to adopt the apostle's similitude,† the veil which covered the face of Moses, too splendid for their weak organs, remained unremoved, (we cannot, I say, wonder, that to them) the Messiah's cross should prove a stumbling-block. It in reality did so. The undoubted fact confirms the reasoning. And the reasoning is, from their avowed principles, so unquestionable, as to be equivalent to the clearest testimony of the fact.

Nor were the prepossessions of Pagans less impregnable, though built on different grounds. Of all nations, the Jewish was the most contemned and hated by both Greeks and Romans. That their contempt and hatred were unreasonable, I readily allow. But it is only with the fact I am here concerned; and that is incontrovertible. It were easy, however, to account for it, from several peculiarities in the Jewish constitution, which made them be reckoned by others, superstitious, unsociable, intolerant, self-opinioned, and untractable. Their refusal of all intercommunity with those of other nations in matters of religion, a thing unexampled amongst idolaters, their distinction of meats into clean and unclean, and their laws in regard to ablutions, which very much interrupted even their civil intercourse with Gentiles, conspired in alienating the minds of strangers. Though not deficient in courage and natural sagacity, their being but little acquainted with the arts of war and government, made them appear inconsiderable in the eyes of the Romans; their ignorance of philosophy and the fine arts, rendered them despicable to the Grecians. It would not have been easy to make the people of either nation expect great benefits of any kind from a Jew. But to talk to them of such a one as their Messiah or Saviour, that is, as the terms were explained by the preachers, the purchaser of the remission of sins, of Divine favour, of eternal life and happiness; nay, as the person constituted by the Deity judge of all the earth, could, to men so ill affected to that people, hardly appear otherwise than as absolutely ridiculous. How much then was the ridicule enhanced, when they were further informed, that this Messiah, this man of circumcision, of the race of Jacob, had, like a common felon, and in company with common felons, suffered under a Roman procurator the infamous death of crucifixion?

It is not easy for us, at this distance, to enter perfectly into the sentiments and feelings of men, whose manners, opinions, education, and customs, were so totally different from ours. It is more difficult on this subject, on which our minds have been so long preoccupied, than on any other. The death of Christ, whom we venerate as our Sovereign, our High Priest, and Teacher in Divine things, hath, to us Christians, ennobled the cross, the instrument of an event of such ineffable moment to the human race. We can no longer behold it with the same eyes. It is for this reason, that, in Christian countries, the use of it in punishing is universally abolished. We are inclined to consider it as too honourable a destiny, for any after Jesus Christ, of the posterity of Adam, to undergo.

* Deut. xxi. 23. † 2 Cor. iii. 14.

But in order to judge of the appearance and effect of a new doctrine, published in a remote period, we must, as much as possible, enter into the opinions and prepossessions that prevailed at the time. Considered in this view, it is but just to observe, that crucifixion was then, in the Roman empire, incomparably more disgraceful than any kind of death known in these days in any part of Christendom. No citizen of Rome, how atrocious soever were his guilt, how mean soever were his station, though the lowest mechanic, or the poorest peasant, could be subjected to it. If a man was not a slave, as well as a criminal, it was not in the power of any magistrate to dishonour him so far as to consign him to so ignominious a punishment. And though the privilege of Romans did not extend to every free subject of the empire, so far did the Roman sentiments prevail in regard to this mode of punishing, that it was held universally as in the last degree opprobrious. Conceive then the emotions which would naturally arise in the minds of such people, when a man (a miserable culprit in their account), who had been compelled publicly to submit to so vile an execution, so degrading, so shocking to humanity, was represented to them as the Son of the Most High God, and the Redeemer of the world. If to men so prepossessed as were the Jews, this doctrine could not fail to appear impious and execrable (and for a time it did so even to the apostles); to men so prepossessed as were the Gentiles, it could not fail to appear nonsensical and absurd.

Nay, it is manifest from the writings of the early apologists for Christianity, in the second and third centuries, that this doctrine continued long to be a principal matter of offence to the enemies of our religion, and was regarded by such as an insurmountable objection. They treated it as no better than madness, to place confidence in a man whom God had abandoned to the scourge of the executioner, and the indelible reproach of the cross. Yet this doctrine was, from the beginning, so far from being taught covertly by the apostles, as one would have thought that a small share of political wisdom would have suggested; it was so far from being dissembled, and palliated, that it appeared to be that particular of their religion, of which, in spite of the utter abomination it raised in others, in spite of all the obloquy it brought upon themselves, they were chiefly ostentatious. With our apostle "the cross of Christ" is a phrase in familiar use for denoting the whole of this new economy. The foes of the gospel he calls "enemies of the cross of Christ."* To the Corinthians, he says, he determined to know nothing among them, save "Jesus Christ and him crucified."† The offence taken against Christianity, he styles, "the offence of the cross."‡ And the grand object of his glorying, was what to others appeared the greatest scandal, "the cross of Christ."§ So much in general (for your time does not admit my entering into particulars) of the foolishness of the doctrine.

Let us next consider the weakness of the instruments, the first missionaries of this new religion. What were they? We should certainly think, that a trust of this kind, requiring the most consummate skill and address to manage properly, could not, with the smallest hope of success, be committed to any, but men, who to great natural shrewdness, and acquired knowledge, had all the advantages that result from being acquainted with the world, and conversant in public life. If to these, wealth, nobility, and authority, were added, so much the better. But were the first publishers of the gospel men of this sort? Nothing can be conceived more opposite. A few fishermen of

* Philip. iii. 18. † 1 Cor. ii. 2. ‡ Gal. v. 11. § Gal. vi. 14

Galilee, and some others of the lowest class of the people, poor, ignorant, totally unacquainted with the world; without any visible advantages natural or acquired; men who, before they received this extraordinary mission, had been obliged to drudge for bread within the narrow limits of a toilsome occupation, and had probably never dared to open their mouth in places where men of condition (their betters, as we familiarly express it) were present. Such were the agents employed in effecting the greatest revolution ever produced upon the earth. Was it in a rude and unlettered age that this religion was first broached? or was it only to the illiterate that its promulgators were charged to communicate it? It was at the time when Rome was in the zenith of her power; it was at the time when all the Grecian arts and sciences shone forth in their meridian glory. It was then that these plain, unexperienced men, were commissioned, not cautiously to impart this doctrine in a whisper, to persons of a particular stamp, but to proclaim it to all indiscriminately, as from the house-tops, to "preach the gospel to every creature."* These lowly ministers of Jesus did accordingly publish it to the Jews in the temple and in the synagogues, and to the Gentiles in the forums of their cities, and in other places of public resort. Their undaunted spirit and freedom, considering what they were, did indeed amaze their superiors, and all who heard them. When the high priest, and other members of the Sanhedrim, "saw the boldness of Peter and John," in the spirited and pertinent reply they made, and perceived "that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled."†

How different is the policy of Heaven—pardon the expression—from that of earth! How truly is the matter represented in my context: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."‡ The apostles were very sensible of their defects, in respect of natural talents, rank, and education; they knew well, that by men of fashion, men of the world, they were counted "as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things."§ But as their zeal was kindled solely in behalf of the cause of their Master, they never affected to conceal or extenuate these defects. They neither disdainfully undervalued those acquired advantages which they had not, but which were possessed by many of their antagonists, nor vainly arrogated to themselves any merit from the success that attended their preaching. Their humble language was, "we have this treasure," the doctrine of the gospel, the inestimable riches of Christ, "in earthen vessels;" not vessels of gold or silver, as men of eminence among the great and learned might be called, but vessels of the very coarsest materials, those denominated the dregs of the people, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."‖

We are apt to attend but carelessly to the report of facts to which our ears have been long familiarized. Such is that of the low condition of those who were the first heralds of the gospel of peace. Besides, to us the very title APOSTLES conveys certain ideas of respect and dignity, which, as it were, hide from us the meanness and obscurity of their outward state. In order, therefore, to rouse our attention to this circumstance, of the utmost importance to the right understanding of my argument, let us consider what would be, I say not probably, but certainly, the effect of such an attempt in our own age and nation, made by such ill-provided, and, as we should say, despicable instruments unaided from above, in opposition to all the established powers, religion, laws, and learning of the country. Yet we have no reason to believe, that our fishermen are, in any respect, inferior to the fishers of those days on the lake of Gennesaret. It would not perhaps be difficult to prove, that in point of education, in this part of the island at least, they are even superior. But to render the parallel complete, and to make it tally perfectly with the infidel hypothesis about the promulgation of the gospel, we must conceive something still more marvellous; namely, that a few such men in this country, so wretchedly accoutred, so unfurnished with human means, friendless and penyless, unacquainted with every language but their mother-tongue, of which they can speak only a provincial and barbarous dialect, form the vast project of traversing Holland, France, Germany, and the other countries on the continent, in order to make converts abroad, to impose on all mankind, and to publish throughout the world, a scheme of doctrine they had previously concerted among themselves. With the least reflection, we see the absolute impracticability of such a plan, when brought home to ourselves. Indeed, it is so glaringly impracticable, that it is not easy for us to conceive that such an extravagance could ever enter into the heads of men in their senses. Yet not one jot better equipped were the apostles, if we abstract from supernatural aid, than such projectors as I have now supposed. In point of language, a most essential circumstance, they could be no way superior.*

Now, the nature of things, my brethren, was the same then that it is at present, and means which we perceive now to be perfectly inadequate, must have been always so. I do not talk of the improbability that such sort of men should, at the risk of peace, liberty, life, and every thing valuable, and without any imaginable motive, have conceived a project so fantastic, because so totally beyond their sphere, as that of subverting all the religious establishments on the face of the earth, of extirpating at once opinions, ceremonies, laws, which had subsisted for many centuries, and even whole orders in society, by substituting in lieu of all these, a new theory of theirs, founded on a false story of their own devising. Nor do I talk of the absurdity of imagining, as some have done, that men who were neither fools nor mad (and if they had been either, their success would not have been less unaccountable) should, in a matter entirely subjected to the testimony of their senses, have imposed upon themselves, and thought they were promoting truth, if it was not so. But I talk at present of the impossibility of such agents succeeding by natural means, in such a design, however formed. To account for the success, therefore, we must necessarily admit the Divine original of the whole, and have recourse to the concurrence of Him who "calleth the things that are not, as though they were,"† and who alone can "destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." With such an Almighty assistant, and nothing less will account for it, they might well be superior to fear and apprehension, and might boldly challenge all human opposition, and say, "Where is

* The speech of the common people has always most of the peculiarities of the province. We have no reason to think that the dialect of any of the twelve was preferable to that of Peter. Yet he was detected at Jerusalem by a servant maid, from his uncouth idiom and accent, to be a Galilean; at a time when, we may believe, he would gladly have concealed his country, by disguising his tongue, if it had been in his power. Matt. xxvi. 73.

* Mark xvi. 15. † Acts iv. 13. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 27—29.
§ 1 Cor. iv. 13. ‖ 2 Cor. iv. 7. † Rom. iv. 17.

the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"*

But it will perhaps be urged, that the apostle Paul ought to be considered as an exception from the general remark I have been explaining. Was not he a man of letters, bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a famous Jewish doctor, and instructed in all the Scriptural and traditionary learning of the Jews? Nay, does it not appear, that he was not altogether unacquainted with the writings of the Grecian poets? It is indeed true; and as we judge of every thing by comparison, so when he is compared with his brethren in the apostolate, he may be denominated *learned*. But it ought to be observed, that as his learning consisted chiefly, I might almost say solely, in the Scriptures, and the Rabbinical doctrine of the Pharisees, it is notorious in how little esteem that kind of erudition was among the Gentiles, of whom he was eminently the apostle. Of whatever account, therefore, this knowledge might have been, had his mission been only or chiefly to the Jews; I must think, it was of very little, if any at all, to the Greeks and Romans. To them all Jewish literature appeared no better than unintelligible, and therefore insignificant, jargon; or, as Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, contemptuously styled it, "questions of words and names, and of their law."† Whatever use Paul might have made of his learning, in disputing with the Jewish doctors, it could be of no service in his disputes with the philosophers of Greece, and the *literati* of Rome. It is remarkable, therefore, that the only man among the first preachers of the gospel, who was in any degree qualified to cope with the learned men of Judea, was not sent to them, but to nations amongst whom his Hebraistic knowledge could give him no advantage. Whereas Peter, who is by way of eminence styled the apostle of the circumcision, as the other is of the Gentiles‡ (Peter, I say), though of their own country, was but one of the untaught rabble, who, on account of the meanness of their birth and station, as well as their ignorance, were by the haughty scribes and rulers accounted the refuse of the earth. "This people," say they, "who know not the law are cursed."§ Nor could Paul, in respect of rank, claim great superiority over the rest. He was only a handicraftsman, having been bred a tent-maker; a business which he occasionally exercised, for the support of himself and his attendants, during his apostleship.

Ay, but had not this man all the advantages resulting from the Grecian arts of logic and rhetoric? Did he not speak their language with elegance and purity? I know the apostle has had some strenuous and well-meaning advocates, especially among the moderns, not infidels, but Christians, who, with more zeal than judgment, have maintained the affirmative. I am far from denying, that this eminent servant of our Lord possessed considerable talents, in respect of natural eloquence, depth of thought, strength of reasoning, and nervousness of expression. But that his Greek diction was pure and classical, or that in composing he followed the rules laid down by rhetoricians, we have the greatest reason to deny. His works that are extant, do, to every able and candid judge of these matters, show the contrary. The contrary was admitted by the best critics and orators among the Greek Fathers, who must be allowed more capable of judging of propriety, fluency, and harmony, in their native tongue, than any modern can be in a dead and foreign language.‖ Further, the contrary is frankly owned by the apostle himself. Nay, he insists, that according to the Divine counsel it must be so, this being of a piece with all the other natural means God had employed in the work. Thus he was "sent to preach the gospel," as he tells us in the context, "not with wisdom of words." Why? "Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."* Shall we then maintain his oratorical talents in spite of himself, and in spite of the irrefragable reason he adduces from the analogy of the Divine procedure, in this whole dispensation? It would be paying him but a bad compliment, to extol his elocution at the expense of his veracity; for we are under a necessity of denying one or other. It appears, that his enemies made a handle of the rudeness and inelegance of his style, to injure his reputation, especially at Corinth, where oratory was much in vogue. But though he vindicates himself from their other censures, he invariably admits the truth of this. "Though rude in speech," says he, "yet not in knowledge."† And, "I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom."‡ And, "the things of God we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth."§ Again, "My speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom." He assigns the reason, the same in import with that given formerly, "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."‖ Speaking of their sentiments concerning him, "His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."¶ The power ascribed to his letters, undoubtedly refers to the sense conveyed in them, and the ardour of spirit by which they are animated. That they did not conceive any part of their merit to be the purity or harmony of the style, is manifest from the latter part of the character, especially when compared with what is repeatedly acknowledged in other places. Paul, therefore, had neither the graces of person, nor the ornaments of elocution, to recommend or enforce his doctrine. His language to Greek ears must have appeared idiomatical, not to say barbarous. And as his sort of learning was but ill adapted to the people of Greece, Italy, or Asia Minor, amongst whom his mission chiefly lay, he did not possess that superiority over the other apostles which is commonly imagined. Justly, therefore, might we apply to a Christian who should zealously assert the classic purity of our apostle's style, the rebuke which our Lord once gave to Peter, on an occasion not unsimilar: "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."** The weakness, the infirmity, or, if you will, the insufficiency of these messengers of the new covenant, was their glory, and their boast. Their motive was, "That the power of Christ might rest upon" them,†† and be manifested by them. To men of the world, indeed, the doctrine appeared not more foolish, than the ministry was weak.

I have now, as I purposed in the first place, shown the inability of the natural means employed in promulgating the gospel, to effect the end.

I proceed to consider, secondly, the rapid and unexampled success of the means that were employed. As to the rapidity of the success, need I use many words to evince a point so evident, and so universally acknowledged? The canon of Scripture was not finished, that generation had not passed, when Jesus Christ had disciples and churches in Judea, Samaria, Syria, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Arabia, the countries of Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, Italy, Egypt, and as far as Ethiopia. This we learn, partly from the books of

* 1 Cor. i. 19, 20. † Acts xviii. 15. ‡ Gal. ii. 7, 8. § John vii. 49.
‖ Such were Origen and Chrysostom.

* 1 Cor. x. 17. † 2 Cor. xi. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 1. § 1 Cor. ii. 13. ‖ 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. ¶ 2 Cor. x. 10. ** Matt. xvi. 23. †† 2 Cor. xii. 9.

the New Testament, partly from the authentic remains of the apostolic fathers. Whilst the faith of the gospel was deeply rooted in all those who professed it; whilst nothing but faith could induce any one to make the profession; whilst the professors themselves were harassed on every side with the most violent persecutions,—the church of Christ, in spite of all opposition, and every species of discouragement, increased daily. In less than three centuries, for I reckon not from the birth of Christ, but, as in a computation of this kind we ought to reckon, from the first publication of the gospel at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (in less than three centuries), Christianity having pierced into Gaul, Spain, Britain, and the African countries lying on the Mediterranean, became the predominant religion of the Roman empire, which comprehended the greater and better part of the then known world. Nor was its extent limited by the empire. It did indeed, with wonderful celerity, overspread the most populous countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Since its establishment by human laws, it hath been put on so different a footing, and the methods taken for propagating it, have been, on some occasions at least, so completely altered, and so little warranted by the spirit and precepts of that religion, that the success or want of success of these methods can hardly affect our present argument.*

Now, as it is admitted on all hands, that the success of the first preachers of the gospel was great and rapid, I maintain that it still remains unexampled. I do not mean to state a comparison between conversion and conquest; between subduing the mind by persuasion, by what our apostle emphatically calls "the foolishness of preaching,"† and conquering the body by the sword. In the one, both the reason and the will are gained by teaching; in the other, a feigned assent is sometimes extorted by violence, and maintained by terror. It does not therefore in the least concern my argument, what the success was of the Mahometan, I say not doctrine, but arms. Their engine was war, not preaching. The weapons of their warfare were carnal, those of the gospel, spiritual. Their aim was submission, not belief; the external profession of the mouth, not the internal conviction of the understanding. When the like methods came to be adopted by Christians (for too soon, alas! they were adopted, a sure sign that the religion of Jesus was then grossly corrupted and debased), the success is doubtless to be accounted for in the same manner. Every candid person will admit, that the success of Charlemagne over the Saxons, is no more an evidence of Divine favour, than that of Mahomet over the Arabs.

But when all attempts of this kind are set aside, one will perhaps be at a loss what to bring into comparison with the first promulgation of the gospel. It is not, however, for want of numerous and repeated trials, even in the way of preaching; but when the effect is inconsiderable, or not correspondent to the expectation raised, the attempt itself comes gradually to be either quite forgotten, or little minded. Crusades, wars, and massacres, have not been the only methods employed by Rome, not over-scrupulous about the means, when the advancement of the hierarchy, that is, the extension of her empire, is the end. She knows how to employ preachers, as well as inquisitors, executioners, and soldiers. Nay, it is no more than doing her justice to acknowledge, that no church whatever, no state, no society, hath done half so much in this way as she hath done. But with what effect? Has there appeared, in any part of the world, even where her missionaries have been most numerous, any fruits of their missions which bear a resemblance to the fruits so quickly produced every where by the apostles of our Lord? Let the most sanguine votaries of that church, who know any thing of the matter, say so, if they dare.

What then is the reason of the difference? Had the latter, the apostles of our Lord, any advantages (observe I speak of human and natural advantages) which the former, the Popish missionaries, had not? Quite the reverse. Every such advantage has been on the side of the missionary, not one on the side of the apostle. They are not ignorant artificers of the lowest class, whom Rome engages in such a business. She hath too much worldly wisdom (notwithstanding her arrogant and not very consistent pretence to miracles) ever to employ such messengers. Neither do her apostles go without the utmost preparation, that not only a learned education, according to the times, can give them, but such particular instructions, study, and discipline, as will serve best to qualify them to accommodate themselves to those to whom they are sent, to gain upon the people, and to bear with fortitude the difficulties and hardships they may be obliged to encounter. It is plain, therefore, that she puts no confidence in her supernatural powers, and acts precisely as though she were conscious she had none. Indeed, since the establishment at Rome of the congregation *de propaganda fide*, no attention, no pains, no expense, have been spared, that could serve for procuring all necessary information, in regard to the languages, arts, manners and customs, of the different nations and tribes to whom it is judged proper to send preachers; that they may be furnished, as much as possible, with every human and natural assistance for the work in which they are engaged. Yet what has been the success hitherto? If one were to judge by the exaggerated accounts that have sometimes been given by the missionaries themselves, we should think them wonderful indeed. But if we judge by the more impartial representations given by

* While there was ample success in the propagation of the gospel in primitive times, to prove its Divine truth; while the success is inexplicable, except from the presence and the power of miracles; there is, at the same time, a danger, speaking popularly, of exaggerating the progress which was actually gained. Gibbon, who is generally accurate in his facts, however prejudiced and perverse in his spirit, contends that, even in the most prosperous times, the Christians were in the minority. The vacillation of Constantine seems to have sprung, in part, from a consciousness of the same kind. The circumstance, that the word "paganus" means both a heathen and a countryman, seems to intimate that, whatever progress the gospel had made in the towns and cities, the country generally remained pagan. But we have still more direct evidence than this. The reader may be surprised to learn, but it is true, that in some of the largest towns and congregations of primitive times, such as Antioch, Rome, and Carthage, the Christians had but a single place of meeting, for three hundred years after Christ. No doubt several congregations may have assembled successively under the same roof on the same Lord's day. But this is certainly an indication of a far more limited progress on the part of Christianity, than is commonly imagined. Till the middle of the fourth century, all the Christians of Alexandria were not too numerous to assemble in one place. My authority for these statements is Lord Chancellor King's able work *On the Primitive Church*. Had the gospel been as prevailing as it was in after times, it is impossible to believe there would not have been, as in modern days, a greater number of places of worship. Dr Ballantine, a keen and able dissenting writer, says, "The primitive church for nearly three hundred years acted under this system (the Voluntary system), and all things considered, its success was certainly extensive; *but there seems no reason to believe she had the means of instructing the great body of the people, till established by law.*" Besides, it is certain that, early in the second and third centuries, Christianity was greatly corrupted in doctrine, and spirit, and practice, beyond the corruption of many parts of modern Protestant Christendom. Dr Campbell speaks of the "establishment of Christianity by human laws," and of unwarrantable methods of propagation: I presume he refers to the atrocities of the Popish method of spreading Popery by persecution. There can be no question, that the civil establishment of the Church of Scotland was, three several times, in the history of this country, crowned with a moral and religious success, far deeper and more pervading than can be alleged of any country in primitive times; and that Christianity, left entirely to itself in modern days, has never been able to reach the same results. Miracles must have made a very important distinction between primitive and present times—a distinction perhaps not sufficiently attended to.—EDITOR.

† 1 Cor. i. 21.

others, or by, what is still a better criterion, the remaining effects of their missions, we must pronounce them inconsiderable. In many places, there is not now a vestige of their labours. In other places, the traces that have been left are, I may say, equivocal, as well as few. Father Charlevoix, one of their own people, in his account of the North American savages, observes, that the missions had been very unsuccessful among them; and, what is more surprising, mentions one missionary, who had ingratiated himself so far with one of their tribes, that they would even have chosen him for their chief, who nevertheless had not been able to persuade one single person among them to embrace Christianity.*

Well, but if the attempts have not proved so successful in the West, what wonders in the way of conversion have not been performed by a Saint Francis Xavier and his associates in the East? Indeed, there is no man in these latter ages who has been so much, and I believe so deservedly, celebrated for his labours in this way, as this friar, whom Rome hath dignified with the title of *the Apostle of the Indies*. He was certainly a most zealous promoter of a cause which he doubtless believed to be the cause of God. His pious intentions deserve the commendation of those who can pity his errors and absurdities. Regard to the voice of conscience, even though a misinformed conscience, is still respectable. But is it not well known, that this famous missionary was not only a man of learning, the best that was then to be had, but, along with his companions, acted under the auspices of the viceroy of Goa, the metropolis of the Portuguese settlements in India? and where, for the greater security of the faith, they soon thought proper to establish the inquisition. Is it not evident, that in most places where the missionaries exercised their function, they were under the protection of the victorious fleets and armies of the king of Portugal? And even where these had not reached, the terror of their name had reached, and was of no little service to these itinerant teachers. How unlike the case of the poor fishermen of Galilee! Miracles indeed, stupendous miracles, were pretended to by them, and those of their party. For we have only the representations of one side. It is surprising they were so often at a loss for one miraculous power, the gift of tongues, so common in the primitive church, which would have been of greater service to them than all the rest together. This however they laudably supplied the best way they could, by the use of interpreters, as well as by study and application.

An eminent French preacher of the last century has affirmed, in a panegyrical sermon on this apostle of the Pope, that he spread the light of the gospel through more than three thousand leagues of country, and subjected no less than fifty-two kingdoms to Jesus Christ. These are big words: but where, I pray, is that country? and where are those kingdoms? This is rather too violent an hyperbole, even for an orator. The conquests made by the Portuguese arms, in like manner as those made since by other European powers, Protestant as well as Popish, are not surely to be called kingdoms converted by preaching the gospel. Yet, abstracting from these settlements, or, if ye will, usurpations, it would be difficult to point out so much as one of those fifty-two kingdoms subdued to Christ. Of the same kind is that other assertion in the same discourse, that Xavier has more than repaired in the East, all the hurt done to Rome by Luther, and Calvin, and the other Reformers (heresiarchs, as he terms them) in the West. Can there be a clearer demonstration of the little regard that is due to the word of a panegyrist and party man? At this day, even in the East, those Reformers have more disciples than Rome has. But, alas! it is not by what the apostle calls "the foolishness of preaching," that disciples have been gained there to either side. The greater part have been transplanted from Europe, or are the descendants of those who were first transplanted thither. The rest are the effects more of conquest than of conversion.

But what shall be said of the wonderful success of Xavier in the islands of Japan? It was indeed as signal as it has proved transitory. Nothing could be more promising than the appearances were for some time. But there was a latent seed of corruption in the doctrine which those missionaries unknowingly misnamed the gospel, that, springing up, produced a plentiful crop of its ordinary fruits, pride, ambition, violence, and faction. These provoked a persecution, which quickly terminated in the total extinction of that infant church. Francis Solier, a Jesuit, who writes the ecclesiastic history of Japan, expresses his astonishment, that God should have permitted the blood of so many martyrs to be shed, without serving (as in the first ages of Christianity) as a fruitful seed for producing new Christians. But this can be no matter of wonder to the intelligent believer. The truth is, the cause was not more different at that time (though under the same name), from what it had been, than were the usual methods by which it was propagated. "The Christianity of the sixteenth century," says a late writer, "had no right to hope for the same favour and protection from God, as the Christianity of the three first centuries. The latter was a benign, gentle, and patient religion, which recommended to subjects submission to their sovereign, and did not endeavour to raise itself to the throne by rebellion. But the Christianity preached to the infidels of the sixteenth century was far different. It was a bloody, murtherous religion, that had been inured to slaughter for five or six hundred years. It had contracted a very long habit of maintaining and aggrandizing itself, by putting to the sword all that resisted it. Fires, executions, the dreadful tribunal of the inquisition, crusades, bulls exciting subjects to rebellion, seditious preachers, conspiracies, assassinations of princes, were the ordinary methods employed against those who refused submission to its orders."* The ingenuous confession of a Spaniard, more honest, it would appear, than wise, may be pleaded in justification of the sanguinary precautions taken by the Emperor of Japan. Being asked by the king of Tossa, one of the Japanese isles, and probably one of the fifty-two kingdoms mentioned by Bourdaloue, How the king of Spain got possession of so great an extent of country in both hemispheres? he answered frankly, That he used to send friars to preach the gospel to foreign nations; and that, after having converted a considerable number of heathens, he sent his forces, who, joining with the new converts, conquered the country. The Christians in that island (such Christians as they were) paid dear for this indiscreet confession. Poor then, if we may judge by the present effects, has been the success of their missions among barbarians. Have they succeeded better in civilized nations? Their missions in China, it is true, have subsisted for centuries. But will the candid and judicious, even of that communion, say, that the consequences have been proportioned to what might have been expected from the assiduity, labour, and expense bestowed on them? Most Roman Catholics themselves, consider the greater part of the Chinese proselytes, as more than half Pagans still. What will Protestants then reckon them?

I know not any thing done by Romanists in modern

* Letter xxxi.

* General Dictionary, Article *Japan*, Note E.

times, that appears more favourable, than what has been effected by some Jesuits in the inland parts of South America, in the country called *Paraguay*. But of this, I am afraid, we have not as yet sufficient knowledge to enable us to form a judgment that can be depended on. Some things, however, will deserve our notice, that we may be satisfied that there is no similarity in this case to the primitive publication of the gospel. In the first place, those Jesuits are to be considered more as the founders of a polity than as the publishers of a religion. Religion, indeed, makes an essential part of their establishment; still it is but a part. Nothing could be more opposite to the conduct of the apostles, whose sole object was to preach the doctrine and law of Christ, and, without interfering in the least with the rights of civil governors, to bring men every where to the obedience of the faith. I observe, secondly, that instead of those poor, illiterate, and obscure men, who first promulgated to the world the everlasting gospel of the Son of God, we have here some select members of an opulent, learned, and political society, who were careful to be previously instructed in the language, manners, and religious observances of the people whom they were to teach; men who had most attentively studied the policy of the ancient South American states, particularly of the Incas of Peru, and the arts they had successfully employed in subduing the ferocity of their neighbours. I observe, thirdly, that it was more by insinuation, and indirectly, than by open and professed teaching, that the knowledge of Christianity was introduced by them. Their direct and only object long appeared to be to teach those savages agriculture, the most necessary manufactures, the art of building, and the other arts most conducive to civilization; and when in this way they had sufficiently recommended themselves to their confidence, to take occasion of inculcating, especially on the children intrusted to their care, their religious principles. The method of the apostles was much shorter; they did not find the least necessity for such artificial management.*

Nor was it only in South America that the Popish missionaries found it convenient to recur to these arts. Of how much consequence it has been for promoting the success of the Chinese mission, that those charged with it were able mathematicians, astronomers, geographers, physicians, and natural philosophers; and how much their knowledge in the sciences conduced to procure them the attention and respect of the natives, all the world knows. Where was the man of these modern apostles, who could say, as the apostle Paul, the poor Hebrew artisan, did to the Corinthians, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified?" Short, we may believe, would have been their abode in China, and in other places too, had they proceeded on this plan. But Paul needed not to depend on any human supplements or assistances whatever. Nothing indeed could be more unlike, or rather greater contrasts, in all respects, than the first ambassadors and the last, those of Jesus Christ, and those of the Roman Pontiff. The last were possessed of those accomplishments which preserved them from appearing despicable to any; the manifest superiority of their knowledge in the elegant, as well as in many of the useful arts, made them be respected as almost a superior order of beings, even by those whom they could not persuade to turn Christian. The first, on the contrary, on account of their low rank, and ignorance of the arts of civilized life, were acknowledged to be, in many respects, but weak and contemptible instruments, even by those who were converted by their ministry. This was evidently the case of him, who of them all, had the best pretensions to knowledge and education. Not to mention the pageantry, even the rich sacerdotal vestments used by the Romish clergy in their worship, are naturally fitted to make an impression on the senses, not only of barbarians, but of the weak and superstitious even of polished nations. How different must the ordinary and homely garments of the primitive preachers have appeared, worn constantly in their peregrinations! for they were not permitted to carry with them so much as a change of raiment.* Nor is this so trivial a circumstance as to some perhaps, on a superficial view, it will appear. Yet after all, with every human and natural advantage, what have been the fruits of the last labourers compared with those of the first? Have we not gotten ample reason, in this view also, to adopt the apostle's words, and, on contrasting Christ's humble delegates to the accomplished ambassadors of Rome, to say, "Where *now*, is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, the weak to confound the mighty, the base and the despised, yea and things that are not to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." If riches and learning, and the most refined policy, with the countenance and support of the secular powers, cannot, though combined, accomplish what, in opposition to all these, is effected with ease by poverty and illiterate simplicity, can we hesitate a moment in pronouncing, "This is the finger of God."†

* I have examined the pretensions of the Foreign missions of the Church of Rome at great length, in a Lecture (the 12th) in the series delivered in Glasgow in 1836-37, entitled "*The Truths of Protestantism Contrasted with the Errors of Popery*;" and I have there shown that, for the most part, the statement as to the success of the Popish missions is grossly exaggerated; that supposing the success to be real, it is not worth having; and that very many of the missions have, in the course of a few years, turned out miserable failures. With regard more particularly to Paraguay, I showed, on the authority of the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and the *Modern Traveller*, "That when the Jesuits were withdrawn, the fabric soon fell into ruins, and the Indians relapsed into their idolatry and savage habits, just as boys drop their tasks the moment they are liberated from school." Again; "When the Jesuits fell, as at the death of a magician all his spells are said to be reversed, all his enchantments are broken, so the effects of their labours melted away, and have left few traces behind. They built upon the sand." Page 75, *Lecture 12th.*—EDITOR.

Since writing the above two years ago, I have learned from a French Roman Catholic journal, some curious facts strikingly illustrative of the decline and almost extinction of Popish Missions. The date of the information is little more than four years ago. According to a French priest, there are 180,000 adherents of the Church of Rome in Tonking, on the borders of China, for the instruction of whom, there are only two aged and infirm priests, one of them above ninety years of age. What sort of Christians must these be—without a Bible too! So of Cochin China, among 80,000 Roman Catholics, there are only two Bishops, and two Grand Vicars, one of the latter is paralytic, the other is never at home! In Siam, there is only one French priest, in a country from which, in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, a strong representation came, that the monarch wished to be converted and all his people!! At Pondicherry, the alleged number of the flock is 140,000; the instructors, one Bishop, and five priests, on a coast of two hundred leagues!! Similar facts as to other quarters are given. The priest concludes with a statement, from which it appears that since 1791, the Popish missionaries had been reduced *one-half*. How different the history of Protestant missions.—*Vide New York Observer, September.* 1834.—EDITOR.

* Matt. x. 10; Luke ix. 3.

† While this argument is most conclusive, and plainly shows that miraculous agency must have been employed, and that to a great extent in primitive times, it must not be imagined that all methods of propagating Christianity apart from miracles are vain. At the time that Dr Campbell wrote, little had been attempted by the Protestant church towards the diffusion of the gospel. Since then various efforts have been made, and with very encouraging success, in different parts of the heathen world. Still, even where most successful, the contrast between primitive and present results is such as must convince every impartial mind that there were influences at work in the former, which we cannot command in the latter. In other words, that God revealed himself to the primitive teachers in miraculous power.—EDITOR.

THE

TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL DEMONSTRATED

FROM THE

CHARACTER OF GOD MANIFESTED IN THE ATONEMENT;

A LETTER TO MR RICHARD CARLILE,

BY

ALEXANDER CARSON.

THE last Tract on the Evidences, to which I shall call the attention of the reader, is entitled, *The Truth of the Gospel Demonstrated from the Character of God Manifested in the Atonement; a Letter to Mr Richard Carlile, by Alexander Carson*, 1820. The author of this most excellent Tract, is, as I have already noticed, a Dissenting minister in Ireland. He is favourably known to the Christian world, by his able services in the Apocrypha controversy; his exposure of German Neology, and his vindication of the law of Christ, in the matter of tribute paying. The person to whom his letter is addressed, is the unhappy Richard Carlile, who has for many years laboured assiduously, and but too successfully, through the press and the print shop, to spread the poison of unblushing infidelity. While, like Mr CARSON, I pity the man from the bottom of my soul, I cannot at the same time help strongly condemning him, and charging guilt home upon his conscience. It is not by mere commiseration that infidels are to be reclaimed. Scripture condemns them as loving the darkness in preference to the light, and this should be held prominently before them.

One great charm of Mr CARSON's paper is, that it contains a clear declaration of the gospel method of salvation; and proves that the gospel itself, supplies one of the best evidences of its own Divinity. Many works on the Evidences do not proceed so far. They may be said to be limited to externals. At least they never venture on the experimental. As far as they go they are conclusive, and render men inexcusable; but they do not go far enough; and by not bringing out the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, they lose a great part of their proof of the Divine origin of the Scriptures. To a man who understands and receives the gospel into his own heart, there is no evidence half so satisfactory, as just its adaptation to his circumstances and necessities as a fallen creature; but without actually experiencing this, one may see such beauty and harmony in the character of God set forth in the gospel, as shall convince him it could not have originated with man, but must have come from heaven. This is the view of the Evidences which Mr CARSON's letter presents; and, rightly understood, it is more wonderful than the morality of the Scriptures, which Rousseau confessed touched his heart. It is interesting to observe, that writers on the Evidences are dwelling more and more upon the *Gospel itself*, as a proof of the Divinity of Christianity. The Rev. Dr Chalmers, and Robert Haldane, Esq., in their valuable works on the Evidences, may be mentioned as peculiarly distinguished in this department of the Christian Proof.

The only addition I could wish were made to Mr CARSON's Tract, is a more express acknowledgment of the work of the Holy Spirit, both in persuading a man to receive the gospel at first, and enabling him to hold by it, and to grow in spiritual fruitfulness through the use of it, afterwards. I have no doubt that the writer holds this doctrine as strongly as I do; but it is well to bring it out, and to remember that, beautiful as the gospel is in itself, and finely adapted to our wants, and established on the most irresistible evidence, still such is the depravity of man, he will not receive it, except constrained by the Almighty power of the Spirit of God.

SIR,

YOUR late conspicuous opposition to the Scriptures, has induced me to suggest to you a few thoughts on the evidence of the gospel. Though I consider you a most determined enemy to Jesus my Lord, my hope and my glory, you shall from me meet with none of that illiberal abuse, with which you are sometimes treated: I view you on the verge of eternal misery, and would gladly be the means of showing you the refuge of the guilty. Jesus died for his enemies, and Richard Carlile cannot be more hostile to the doctrine of the cross, than was Saul of Tarsus. Jesus has the hearts of all men in his hands; and should he open your eyes, your rebellion would be instantly subdued, and instead of reviling his word, your language would be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It could not then serve my purpose to undervalue your understanding, or endeavour to bring your motives into suspicion. Should you even die in blaspheming the truth, a Christian has no disposition to revile you.

From my soul I pity the man who loses both worlds by his error.

Permit me then, Sir, to bespeak your candid attention to what I shall submit. You must grant, that to determine correctly on this subject is a matter of the utmost importance. If the gospel is true, eternal damnation is the inevitable doom of all who believe it not. It is not then the part of a rational man to neglect to examine its pretences, or to reject it on slight consideration. To enter on the investigation of the subject determined to oppose, manifests the highest temerity. Yet, Sir, permit me to observe, that in the writings of all the infidels with which I am acquainted, there is a total want of candid discussion. Their rancorous hatred of the God of the Scriptures, urges them to endeavour to prove them untrue.

Yet there is a timid acquiescence in the truth of Christianity as little to be approved. Many declaimers against infidelity cry out, "Why rob us of our pleasing hopes, even though vain? Why awake us from our dreams of future felicity? Let us enjoy our consoling delusions. It is cruel to deprive us of the only alleviation of human misery." This is not the language of any man who understands the evidence of the gospel: it is not the language of reason. The belief of imposture can never be useful: to expose imposture cannot be criminal. If the Scriptures are a forgery, let them by candid reasoning be proved to be such. The God of truth cannot need the assistance of lies in the management of his empire.

It is not my intention to undertake a defence of Christianity from all the sources of its evidence. No truth ever communicated to the world recommends itself by such a variety of means of proof. Each of these is worthy of full exhibition by those who have leisure for the task. But of all proofs the most satisfactory to a Christian are found in the Scriptures themselves. These are open to the inspection of all, and level to the meanest capacity. I shall not, however, attempt to exhibit the general evidence that appears in the Scriptures, attesting their Divine original. Even this branch of the subject would require volumes to do it justice. I shall confine myself to a single point. I undertake to prove the gospel to be true from its own nature. I maintain that the way of salvation which it proclaims, gives such a character of God, as to demonstrate its own truth; and that, were it to be found in an island, without any other testimony, it is entitled to acceptance with the fullest confidence. Those who should reject it, even in these circumstances, would reject it to their own just condemnation. No man who candidly examines the witness now at the bar, and discerns the import of his testimony, can withhold his conviction, that said witness is acquainted with the true God, and commissioned to declare him to the world.

All the attributes of the Divine character are displayed in the Scriptures, in a manner infinitely more glorious than the representations of them by the wisest of the human race. Granting that the ancient philosophers had some glimmerings of the unity, power, and immensity of God, they never gave the slightest hint for the illustration of those Divine attributes which most concern the happiness of man. The God that philosophy now boasts has been principally stolen from the Scriptures. But we need not rest any thing on what, it appears from their writings, philosophers did not know: we are warranted in asserting, that the Scriptures give views of the Divine character, perfectly rational, yet utterly unattainable from a view of the works of creation. Not only were some parts of the Divine character previously unknown; they are still to be seen in no other light than that of the gospel. On the knowledge of these attributes depends the happiness of man. I shall begin with justice.

JUSTICE.

The infinite justice of God is to be seen in no other view than in the redemption of sinners through the atonement. No other plan of salvation has ever attempted to show God to be perfectly just. Every system, so far as it admits guilt in men, must view God as deficient in justice, if he saves them. Now, if all the human race are finally to be happy without atonement to justice, God must be unjust in proportion to the aggregate amount of human guilt. Do you believe yourself to be in any measure guilty before God? How do you expect to free yourself from your guilt? Do you believe that the good you have done will compensate for the evil? Granting that your whole life had been a course of the highest virtue, with a single slight exception, all your goodness could not make amends for that single exception. I do not now speak from the authority of the Scriptures: I speak from reason. Is not the Author of your existence entitled to your perfect obedience? Can you do more than your duty? When you have done all, are you not an unprofitable servant? The best actions have nothing to spare for the covering of the sin. Would this pay a debt to any earthly creditor? Should any one produce to you nine good shillings with one bad one, would you accept it in payment for ten shillings? Should this person urge that as there were so many good shillings, and but a single bad one, you ought to receive the latter for the sake of the former, would you not think him either a knave or a fool? And will you venture to meet God on similar ground? You hope to escape punishment though you are not sinless; your God then is unjust. But, perhaps you will say, that as God is merciful as well as just, mercy will temper justice, and make it abate something of its demands. Granting for a moment that this is the case, I say again, your God is unjust. So far as his mercy bears down his justice, there is an inconsistency and opposition in his attributes, and the former robs the latter of its right. Your God is at war with himself, and the quarrel among his attributes, can be settled only by compromise. Will you say, that temporary punishment on yourself, either here or hereafter, will atone for your guilt? Where do you learn this? Is it a self-evident truth? But granting it to be true, if your God exacts full punishment from all, he is a God without mercy. The God of the Scriptures is the only God who is perfectly just, while he has mercy upon sinners. Now, Sir, I entreat you to consider how illustriously justice shines in the salvation of guilty men through the atonement made by the blood of Jesus Christ. Every scheme of salvation devised by human wisdom, leaves the sinner in arrear to justice. The claims of this Divine attribute are never perfectly respected. Here is a plan of salvation that gives infinite justice all its own. Instead of derogating from justice, the redemption of sinners by Christ, has magnified the law, and made it honourable. The eternal damnation of all mankind would not have done such honour to the law of God, nor have rendered his justice so illustrious. In the atonement of Christ, justice has a full compensation, which it never could have had in the punishment of the sinner himself. They who shall suffer for their sins, shall never have paid off the debt. What can be more honourable to the law of God, than that nothing less than the blood of his own Son could free from the wrath due to the breach of it? The infinitely worthy Sacrifice gave justice a full remuneration. Here is justice in perfection. What a solid ground of confidence does this

give to a Christian? He depends not more on mercy than on justice and truth. The Scriptures declare that God is *faithful* and *just* to forgive the sins of believers. The righteousness of a Christian is better than that of the highest angel in heaven. It is the righteousness of the Son of God. Clear views of the Divine character give a sinner the utmost confidence in the presence of God. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God himself who clears them. Who is he that condemneth? Christ hath died. His blood takes away all the guilt of all who believe in him. The most hardened enemy of God and his people, will not be able to allege in the day of judgment, that in the salvation of sinners, God has remitted a tittle of his justice. There will not be found a spot on the whole ransomed of the Lord. So far from tarnishing justice, the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, was necessary for the perfect manifestation of this attribute. In no other way could the infinitude of justice have been seen. It is the highest practical exhibition that infinite power could possibly give of infinite justice. Had sin never existed, Divine justice would have wanted its most perfect manifestation. In vain should we turn our eyes to the heavens and the earth for the discovery of this attribute. In vain should we search for it in the book of Providence, that records the acts of God's government of the world. Some twinklings of it may be seen, but they are scarcely visible from the glare of human crime. Even in hell itself, justice shines not with such lustre, as in the atonement of sin by the blood of a Divine personage.

Now, Sir, you say that the Scriptures are a forgery. Here is a Divine attribute which they display in perfection, which never was discovered by any of the human race. Here is a Divine attribute, which no other scheme of salvation but that taught in the Scriptures, can represent in infinite perfection. Will you say, that a number of illiterate fishermen have discovered that, which from the foundation of the world has lain hid from the wisest of the children of men? Nay, to this hour, it lies hid from the wisest of men, who through the pride of their wisdom will not submit to the wisdom of God. This discovery is still unknown to multitudes who have in their hands the volumes that contain it. Not only infidels, but the great body of those who call themselves Christians, still restrict the Divine justice, and make the salvation of sinners the result of the victory of mercy. What then should bring to the minds of the apostles a view of justice so sublime, so perfect, so astonishing, so far from the common way of thinking? What should lead them to discover what the wilful blindness of others will not suffer them to perceive even when discovered? If all men but the apostles, and those who receive their testimony, consider justice as standing in the way of the salvation of the guilty, and find it necessary to limit and mitigate this Divine attribute, before they can indulge hope before God, it is demonstrably certain that this view never was originally suggested by man. Even granting that this view of the Divine justice is false, and that the philosophical or common view of that attribute is just, I maintain, that this is a more sublime conception than the others, and if God's justice were such, he would be more perfect and glorious than he is without it. If the imperfectly just God be the true God, here is a theory of Divine justice that could render God infinitely more perfect than he is. Here is a plan that removes all the limitations of this attribute. But that cannot possibly be a true view of a Divine perfection, that represents it as capable of additional perfection. Shall it be possible to conceive a view of justice more excellent than that which belongs to the true God? The God of the Scriptures is so just that no sin ever will be committed, without being visited with adequate punishment; that neither angel nor man shall ever dwell in his presence tarnished with the slightest impurity. If your God be the true God, he is much inferior to this, for if he suffers the world to escape punishment, he is obliged to lay aside justice, and become like the gods of Epicurus. The justice of the God of the Scriptures is vindicated by the blood of a Divine person: the justice of your God is affronted without receiving any compensation. Can there be a question which of these is the true God? Here is justice in perfection: here is justice utterly beyond human invention: here is justice essentially different from the natural views of that Divine attribute entertained by savage and sage: here is a just God, though a Saviour of men. Sir, it is not more clear to me that there is a God, than that this is the true God. It is as clear as the light of heaven, that this character of God has come from himself. It would be more reasonable to ascribe the Newtonian philosophy to an idiot, than the origin of this conception to the human mind.

MERCY.

Let us next attend to mercy. However fond men may be of giving this attribute a prominent place in the Divine character, yet no human scheme of salvation has ever admitted it in a perfect degree. Men in general have no more idea of infinite mercy in God, than they have of infinite justice. They consider the salvation of sinners as owing neither to justice nor mercy in perfection and in harmony, but to the claims of both as mitigated by opposition. A salvation wholly of justice they fear, a salvation wholly of mercy they disdain. But the salvation of the gospel is of infinite mercy as well as of infinite justice. The mercy of God is unmixed mercy. The Scriptures declare salvation wholly of grace, without works of any kind or in any degree, as necessary for its reception. It is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. Since the foundation of the world, no man untaught by God ever looked for salvation in this way. Human wisdom in the learned and in the ignorant, in the civilized and in the barbarous, invariably expects that salvation will not be given without something on the part of the sinner himself to merit such a favour. The grace of God is not considered to consist in giving for nothing, but in giving at an undervalue. The great blessing of pardon is given for something done by the sinner, which in itself is not of adequate value. Men, according to their view of their own character, vary in the degree of mercy and of merit, thought requisite to their salvation. But without some degree of merit to recommend him, no man will venture his trust on mercy. The most abandoned profligate on the street, reeling and foaming out blasphemy, must be saved by some kind of goodness in himself, as well as mercy in God. On the very gallows he has some fancied merit to avert the Divine vengeance due to a life of rapine and murder. Unless he has believed God's testimony about his Son, he dare no more trust wholly to mercy, than to unmixed justice. Now, Sir, were the gospel a forgery, would not the mercy of God be represented in it agreeably to the common views of men of that attribute? I hold it to be a self-evident truth, that if the mercy of God in the Scriptures is of a peculiar kind, that never suggested itself to the mind of man in any age or country, it cannot be looked upon as an invention of man. But it is not only mercy of a peculiar kind, it is the only kind of mercy that is worthy of God. It is pure mercy. A Divine attribute must be without alloy. Here then, Sir, is

a thing the most wonderful. Have unlettered impostors brought to view a Divine attribute, of the true nature of which all men in all ages have been ignorant?—an attribute that all men speak of, and to discover the true nature of which is every man's greatest interest? For though this view of the Divine character was discovered by none of the human race, yet when perceived, it recommends itself as perfect wisdom. When the eye of reason perceives it, conviction is absolutely irresistible. It is impossible to perceive God without knowing that he is God. Men who have never seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, may be imposed on with false gods; but, after they have seen the true God, the infinite glory of his perfections intuitively convinces them of his existence. The King of heaven has only to show himself to men, to thwart the pretensions of all usurpers. Yes, if Mr Richard Carlile perceived the glory of the character which God has revealed of himself, he would admire and love the God that now he hates. He would confess that he never knew God before. He would count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. If he will not perceive this glory, it must be owing to the shutting of his eyes against the light. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not: lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." If he does not discern Christ's doctrine, it is because he cannot bear to hear it with a proper mind.

The mercy of God in the Scriptures, is not only pure, it is also perfect. It extends to the chief of sinners. It receives at the last moment the most hateful of his enemies, through the belief of the truth. The thief on the cross found mercy on the very brink of eternity. Saul of Tarsus, the greatest enemy of Jesus, was delivered by this mercy, at a time when, with a heart full of enmity, he was hasting to destroy the disciples. The hands of the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost, were reeking with the blood through which they found mercy. These facts, while they call on the chief of sinners to believe in Jesus for salvation, serve to distinguish the Divine mercy from all the views of it ever suggested or entertained by the wisdom of man. Instead of owing its origin to the contrivance of man, human wisdom has ever been ashamed of this view of the Divine mercy. The illustrious facts above cited, are by many professed Christians kept in the back ground, or represented as a sort of anomaly in the Divine conduct. Men dread the scowl of philosophy, and are apprehensive lest such representations of mercy should give encouragement to sin. So opposed are we naturally to this view of the Divine character, that men use the utmost ingenuity to reconcile the Scriptures to human merit. They either give no encouragement to great sinners to turn to God through the belief of the truth, or they speak on this subject with a faltering voice. When a man is on the brink of eternity, they are indeed unwilling to give him up to despair; yet they are afraid to give him hope through mercy, if he has been a very great sinner, lest they should endanger the interests of morality, and encourage others to continue in sin. Now, if the wisdom of man universally puts limits to the Divine mercy, the view of God's character that represents this attribute as perfect, cannot be from man.

But Divine mercy is not only perfect, it is also sovereign. It not only extends to the chief of sinners, but, from among sinners, it takes one and leaves another, without any other reason than the will of God. Nay, it often selects the one that human mercy would overlook, and overlooks the one that human mercy would select. It chose the persecuting Saul, and overlooked the rich young man who professed to come for instruction. It saved many of the publicans and sinners, while it overlooked many who boasted of their religious attainments. Now, this is mercy truly sovereign, and mercy which no man will ever cordially admit, whose high thoughts are not brought down by the word and Spirit of God. Nothing is more offensive to the world than this view of the Divine character. It is well known, that many who acknowledge this as a religious sentiment, are found to revolt at it in heart. Men will make God as accountable to them for the exercise of his mercy, as they are accountable to him in the exercise of his justice. They will not allow him to condemn or pardon the guilty as he pleases. He is not permitted to select a vile sinner, nor is he allowed to condemn those of a moderate character. Men therefore do not make God perfectly sovereign, therefore they do not make him truly God. If all men are guilty and worthy of punishment, which most who are called Christians admit, a sovereign God may punish all. If his mercy cannot save one, and pass by another, he is no sovereign. Here then is an attribute of God necessary to the Divine perfection, which human wisdom, so far from discovering, cannot admit. Shall we say that it was the invention of men?

But, granting that the apostles were capable of such a forgery, would impostors forge a character of their God, which they must know would be displeasing to the world? What object could impostors have but to advance their temporal interests by gaining disciples? How could they expect to do this by presenting to them a God whom they hate? Such is our natural opposition to this attribute of God, that many deny it as it respects men, who admit it as it respects angels. They admit that the fallen angels are left in misery without mercy; and that, without any superior claims to regard, God sent his Son to redeem men. They will not allow God to choose among sinners, though they grant that he chose men rather than angels.

Indeed, I am sensible, that, to many called Christians, this whole view of mercy will be as disagreeable as your infidelity, and that your God will be more popular than mine. Were my object to please men, I would represent God as extending mercy to all that deserve mercy, and would scarcely pronounce the damnation even of the infidel. Since, then, the sovereignty of God is displeasing to the world, I conclude, as from an axiom, that it is not an invention of impostors; and, since it is necessary to the perfection of the Divine character, the book that discovers it must be a revelation from God.

I entreat you also, Sir, to consider the peculiar aspect of this sovereign mercy. There is a weak and wicked partiality which the gods of all nations are supposed to have for their favourite countries. This partiality the Jews supposed that the God of Israel had for them. In this confidence, they considered themselves safe in doing the sins for which they knew the other nations of the world would be punished. This sort of partiality many think that God will have towards the professors of Christianity, while he will more rigorously look to the conduct of infidels. While they drink, and swear, and lie, and cheat, without any dread of the Divine displeasure, they see the wrath of God coming on Mr Carlile. Indeed, there is a sectarian god, who winks at the sins of zealots of a favourite party; but this is not the sovereignly merciful Lord God of the Scriptures: it is an idol of man's own creation, and the damnation of its deluded votaries is expressly declared by the true God. One of his ambassadors replies to them, at large, in the begin-

ning of the epistle to the Romans—"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" Rom. ii. 3. Though the God of the Scriptures selects one sinner as an object of mercy, and leaves another, not more criminal, to perish, he declares that there is no respect of persons with him. Rom. ii. 11. God's free mercy leads him to choose a sinner, without respect to his previous character; and his sovereign mercy to choose one rather than another: but neither the freedom nor sovereignty of mercy will cover any persisting in sin. All who receive this free sovereign mercy, are taught to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. ii. 12—15. All then who encourage themselves in sin, from a hope of the Divine partiality in their favour, prove themselves ignorant of the true nature of God's sovereign mercy, and discover themselves to be mere hypocrites. The same gospel that reveals mercy, free sovereign mercy, reveals the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Now, Sir, if all men naturally view themselves as so entitled to the favour of their gods, that they may safely do what is condemnation to others, is it not self-evident, that, had the apostles been impostors, they would have given the same view of their God? While he would have frowned on the crimes of others, he would have looked with an indulgent eye on the vices of his friends. All people accommodate the character of their gods to their own wants. The character given of God in the Scriptures has been altered, to make it suitable to the professors of Christianity. Does not this incontestibly prove, that the Scriptures were not made by man? Had they been an imposture of man, their God would have been like the gods of human creation.

WISDOM.

The wisdom of God is the next of his attributes, to which I take the liberty to call your attention. This appears in a blaze of light, in the harmonizing of attributes necessary to the Divine perfection, yet by all men, untaught by the Scriptures, thought irreconcilable. The plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, gives scope for the perfect operation of both justice and mercy, attributes which no other scheme of salvation can harmonize. Their claims are in themselves opposite, and, except on the gospel plan, really irreconcilable. If salvation is by perfect justice, how can it be in any measure by mercy? If it is altogether of mercy, how can it be in any measure by justice? Especially how can it be of infinite justice and of infinite mercy? If justice has all its own, how can mercy give all? If mercy gives all, how can justice receive its due? What mercy is there in cancelling debts that are fully paid? What justice can there be in free pardon? This is a question the solution of which is easy to the Christian, but by all others will remain unsolved for ever. The salvation of the believer is perfect justice, because his sin is fully punished in Christ, infinitely worthy as a Divine person: it is perfect mercy, because that punishment was suffered, not by the sinner himself, but by his Divine Substitute, sovereignly appointed. It is thus that the Scriptures speak of the believer as both justified and pardoned—words, in themselves, irreconcilable in any other way. To justify is to acquit, as being free from guilt: to pardon, is to freely forgive the person proved to be guilty. Believers are in different respects both guilty and innocent, pardoned and cleared. They are cleared of all sin, because their Substitute hath taken it away; yet this is, in another light, pardon, because the Substitute was a Divine person, freely given for sinners. Here is wisdom truly Divine. It is not indeed the wisdom of this world; it is not like the speculations of philosophy: but to all whose eyes are not shut against it, through their enmity to God, there is an overwhelming glory in it that delights and amazes the soul. The more clearly it is understood, the more it astonishes. It commands the admiration of angels, though it is the scorn of the perverted intellect of rebellious men. Read all the treatises of all the wise men who have written on the being and attributes of God. Do you find any thing in their views of Divine wisdom like this? Which of them has a God perfectly just, and perfectly merciful? Could the intellect of an angel suggest any other way of harmonizing these attributes? You say the gospel is an imposture! What! Impostors forge such a God as this! Tell me that the heavens and the earth are not the work of God, but a forgery of some impostors. There is wisdom in the formation of the heavens and the earth, but in all the works of heaven and earth, there is not such wisdom as is displayed in that glorious plan of salvation that harmonizes infinite justice with infinite mercy.

Human wisdom has never even attempted to reconcile these attributes. Its only aim is to produce hope, and to promote virtue, by modifying and opposing them. Mercy obliges justice to work at the salvation of the imperfectly virtuous, and justice forbids mercy to stretch out her hand to the utterly vicious. Thus they continually oppose each other. Mercy, indeed, must have precedency, and the claims of justice on many urgent occasions are thwarted. The glory of the Divine character, instead of being made to consist in the perfection and harmony of God's attributes, is made to consist in the victory of mercy in a struggle with justice. This is the god of the savage and of the sage, of the virtuous and of the vicious. This is the god of the wisdom of this world. But the Scriptures give us a God free of these imperfections. If there is a God, this is the true God.

The wisdom of God shines also in a wonderful manner in the mercy of the atonement. The exercise of mercy, as a human attribute, always, in some measure, gives encouragement to trespass. In proportion as there is a facility of obtaining mercy, will men be emboldened to violate law. Valuable as this prerogative is in our sovereign, it is necessarily accompanied with this disadvantage. Accordingly, the more effectually to prevent forgery, there has been no instance of the pardon of this crime. I believe the highest interest has failed in procuring it from a very merciful king. Men naturally entertain the same views of the Divine mercy, and, in proportion as they think God to be merciful, have they hopes of committing sin with impunity. The most wicked men accordingly shelter themselves under the Divine mercy, even while they continue in wickedness. *God is merciful*, is the refuge of the bulk of mankind, and their encouragement to disobey the God of mercy. That this is also the opinion of many of the advocates of Christianity, with regard to the tendency of Divine mercy, is clear, from their efforts to guard and limit it. They do not like to represent it with a very favourable aspect to the chief of sinners, nor are they fond of making it hang over the pillow of aged sinners. If the thief on the cross found mercy, the Saviour was then personally present, and the peculiar circumstances of that case can never again occur. They fear lest such views of

mercy should encourage others to sin, with a prospect of pardon in their last moments. And, with their views of mercy, they are right in their conclusions. If Divine mercy were like human mercy, all those dreaded consequences would flow from it. Their error lies in their views of the Divine mercy. Human mercy necessarily encourages to transgress; but the mercy revealed in the atonement is the strongest guard against sin. No man who really understands the mercy of God discovered in the salvation of Jesus Christ can live in sin. Though there is a free pardon to the sinner, this cost nothing less than the life of the Son of God. If sin is such a thing, that it could not be forgiven without the punishment of a Divine person, it is demonstrably evident that it is most hateful to God; and that any person who loves it, and continues in it, cannot escape the Divine wrath. If God spared not his own Son, when he stood in the room of sinners, shall any man expect to commit sin with impunity? Every man who believes that Jesus died by sin, considers himself as having died with him; and having this dreadful lesson before his eyes, he is effectually deterred from living in sin. In this view, sin appears no light matter. If any man, professing to be saved by the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, encourages himself to sin, with the hopes of impunity, he proves that he understands not this Divine attribute, and that he has no part in the salvation of the gospel. How can they who have died by sin, live any longer therein? Is it possible that any man should perceive the mercy of God in the gift of his Son, and his infinite hatred of sin, yet continue in that, on account of which the Father punished his Son without mercy? If Jesus drank the cup to the dregs, shall the hypocrite be suffered to escape? Men, therefore, who fear the consequences of exhibiting Divine mercy in all its freedom and fulness, err through not knowing the Scriptures, and by confounding the mercy of man with the mercy of God. When the king pardons a guilty man, justice bleeds; but when God pardons a sinner, justice has all its own. The broken law is more honoured in the atonement made by the Divine Substitute, than in the punishment of the transgressor himself. No king could safely imitate the Divine mercy. Were he to save enormously guilty criminals, the common sense of mankind would revolt, the authority of law would be disrespected, and the total subversion of manners would follow. But God pardons the murderers of his own Son, without the slightest imputation on his justice, without injury to his law, without encouragement to transgression. Nay, God's hatred of the sin of the murderers of his Son, is more seen in the death of that Son for such sinners, than in the punishment of such of these murderers as are now in hell. Were a judge to free an insolvent debtor, his mercy would be unjust; but were he to free him by paying his debt, mercy and justice meet. If among a number of housebreakers there were one who, at the hazard of his life, had prevented his associates from murdering a family, and another who exerted every effort for their destruction, the common sense of mankind would be shocked, should a king pardon the latter, and suffer the former to perish for his crime. This would indeed be a monstrously bad action, and calculated, by its example, to endanger society. But God might save the guiltier of the two, and suffer the less guilty to die in his sins, without the slightest imputation on the tendency of his mercy. They are both guilty, therefore both may justly suffer, in proportion to their guilt. Should Divine mercy choose to snatch the guiltier from destruction, the blood of the Son of God has sufficiently avenged justice.

Now, Sir, as human mercy necessarily encourages crime, as all men naturally entertain the same views of the Divine mercy, would not every religious system of human invention, give the same representation of this attribute, and guard accordingly against its supposed tendency? Has not this actually been done even by the advocates of Christianity? Were the gospel a device of man, its mercy would be the mercy of man? Is not this an axiom? But as the mercy revealed in the atonement, is not only of a peculiar kind, supposed by those who do not understand it, to give encouragement to sinners, but is in reality the strongest guard against it, shall we suppose that this is the invention of imposture? Here is amazing wisdom. Mercy to the chief of sinners, mercy at the last breath of life, yet mercy that effectually induces all who receive it to forsake sin! Shall this wisdom be ascribed to men totally unacquainted with philosophical speculation, when all the philosophers in all ages of the world have been unable to find it by their wisdom? when it lies hid from most of them, even when before their eyes, and while they profess faith in the books that make the revelation? Shall impostors be the authors of a view of Divine mercy that gives no shelter to sin?

The wisdom of God shines also illustriously in the gospel, by causing sin, which in itself is dishonourable to God, to redound to his glory. By tempting our first parents to sin, Satan meant to dishonour God, and mar his purpose. But God hath made the introduction of sin the means of the manifestation of his glory. The redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary for the full display of the Divine character. In no other way could his attributes have been practically exhibited. In this way God showed himself to the world. The person and work of Jesus Christ revealed God to mankind. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined into the hearts of men, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The glory of God is seen in its highest exhibition, in the person and work of his Son. The heavens indeed declare his glory, but the gospel manifests a work more glorious than the creation. Can any thing be more wonderful than this? Sin, the most hateful and apparently injurious thing to God, has served to manifest his glory! Could such a thought ever have entered the mind of man? Even when revealed, it remains hid to many. The salvation of the gospel, is considered by many who profess it, as a kind of after-thought in God, the best possible reparation of an evil not capable of being entirely mended. Whence then could come the thought, that the entrance of sin was necessary to show God to be what he is?

The wisdom of God is also seen in the event of sin with respect to the redeemed. So far from ruining them according to its natural tendency, it has issued in their infinitely greater happiness and glory. They are not restored to a happy life in an earthly paradise, but by being united unto God through Jesus, they are raised above all worlds, and shall reign with him for ever. As Jesus has overcome, and is set down on his Father's throne, they also shall sit down with him on his throne. Here is wisdom. The efforts of Satan to plunge men into the misery of hell, have issued in the raising of millions of them to the throne of God. Did ever such a thought originate with man? Compared with this, the loftiest conceptions of Plato dwindle into utter insignificance.

This scheme of salvation manifests the Divine wisdom also, in as much as it harmonizes confidence and humility; the former necessary for the peace of the Christian, the latter essential to a just sense of his own

character. Yet these two things are in themselves inconsistent, and according to all other views of salvation, the one decreases by the increase of the other. If a man has a low opinion of his own merit, he can have little hope: if he has great confidence, he can possess little humility. "I do not see," said one, "why such a man as Dr Price, should not confide on the justice of the Deity as well as on his mercy." The high moral attainments of the sage come impudently to the bar of the Almighty, and demand a reward from justice. According to the view of the person who made use of this language, there was no scope for humility in this case. Now, the same is the tendency of the confidence of the devotee, and of confidence arising from every species of religious attainments. How very inconsistent this is with the real situation of man, is abundantly obvious, even independent of revelation. Had Dr Price been as pure as the throne of God, I defy reason to say, that God would have done him any injustice, had he annihilated him. A sinless being indeed justice cannot punish, but a sovereign God may take away that which he freely gave. His wisdom is a security against caprice, but let not angels dare to make God their debtor. The thought would hurl them into hell. But if there were any speck of sin in the philosopher (and every man not blinded by the influence of the god of this world, must know him to be a sinner), instead of confiding in justice, it is impossible in himself even to meet its claims. My reason tells me, that ten thousand years of uninterrupted virtue, cannot cover a single offence. On this point, view the glory of the gospel plan of salvation. It unites the utmost confidence with the greatest humility. Nay, humility is increased with the increase of confidence. A Christian is never so humble, as when he perceives most clearly the ground of confidence in the work of Christ. If the earth were on fire under his feet, were the heavens melting over his head, were the red right hand of justice stretched out to take vengeance on iniquity, clearly perceiving this character of God, he would possess his soul in peace. He would triumph in the view of the bar of God, yet at the same moment would be clothed with humility in proportion to his confidence. He has no confidence in his own attainments: he sees himself utterly unworthy. He can indeed confide in justice as well as in mercy, but he has a Divine righteousness to meet Divine justice. The apostle Paul exclaims, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" yet in the same letter he declares, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Here then is the harmony of contraries. Shall this wonderful depth of wisdom be ascribed to man, when all men but those taught by the apostles, consider these two things incompatible? Tell the world that you have great confidence of salvation, and every man will immediately reply, "Then you must have a very high opinion of yourself." If then the gospel reveals a plan which gives the utmost confidence, not only without encouraging self-conceit, but in necessary union with the deepest humility, I conclude as from an axiom, that the gospel is from God.

LOVE.

The love of God is an attribute which shines most illustriously in the atonement. To die for a friend, is the highest instance of love among mankind; an instance scarcely ever found. But God commended his love to men, in that, while they were yet sinners, Christ died for them. Among all the ransomed of the Lord, there is not one who is not naturally an enemy to him. There is not one of the human race who does not hate this God, till he perceives his love in the atonement. You, Sir, can need no proof from me that you hate the God of the Scriptures. Even this God of love you hate to such a degree, that you are willing to make yourself a sacrifice to defame him. You no doubt love your own god, but he is an idol: he is the creation of your own fancy. You love your god even for his imperfections. The God of the Scriptures you hate even for the perfection of his character. How enormous must be the hatred of Mr Paine and you to this God, when you find debauchery in the holy records of the incarnation? To him that believes in a Being of Almighty power, is there any thing more incredible in the manner of the Saviour's conception, than in the ordinary production of man? Yet how does the malignity of your heart manifest itself with regard to this amazing instance of the infinite love and condescension of God! Now, had the Scriptures been the work of man, would they have represented, that the love of God was such that he gave his Son to suffer for such men as you? Would they ever speak of mercy to such enemies? Yet, thou blasphemer of the God of love, thou enemy of the incarnate Jehovah, to you does the gospel proclaim mercy. The blood that you have trampled on was shed for such enemies. Should God change your mind to the acknowledgment of the truth, after all your blasphemies, you should stand without spot before him in love, and reign with Jesus over all worlds. Here is love beyond any thing that could ever have entered into the mind of man. So far from being the authors of such a view of Divine love, men cannot credit it when revealed in the Scriptures. Multitudes even of those called Christians, would hesitate in making the Divine love extend to you. Some of them would grudge you such mercy. Surely then such a view of the love of God must have come from heaven. It has no feature of the offspring of man. Now, Sir, I entreat you to consider what is your guilt, if this gospel is true. What must be your condemnation if you persist in opposing this God of love? If an infinitely just God will punish sin as it deserves, what must be the punishment of the man, who counteracts the purposes of infinite love, and labours with such zeal for the damnation of mankind!

Again, and again I entreat you, Sir, to contemplate the love of God in the gift of his Son. This is the greatest possible instance that infinite love could give of itself. The gift of ten thousand worlds would have been nothing to this. God, even the infinite Jehovah, had nothing greater to give. Could the thought of such amazing love have originated in the mind of man?

HOLINESS.

The atonement manifests also God's infinite holiness, and hatred of sin. How hateful must sin be to God, when he punished it even to its utmost desert in the person of his own Son? Can infidelity, can philosophy, produce any such proof of God's displeasure at sin? Did ever any philosopher conceive a God so holy, as to punish every sin to its utmost desert? No, the god of philosophy is very moderate in his hatred of sin, and makes many allowances for human infirmity. He must accommodate himself to the necessities of his worshippers, otherwise like Saturn he will be dethroned. As human nature is bankrupt, he must give an acquittance for a reasonable composition: as men have such passions, he must indulge them in some occasional deviations from duty. He is like a good natured old man, who himself has no relish for folly, but indulgently winks at the levities and indiscretions of youth. This, Sir, I suppose is your God, and it is not strange that you should love him. But the infinitely holy God of the Scriptures has revealed his wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of

men. Affliction and anguish are denounced as the portion of every one that doth evil. The smallest violation of the Divine law subjects to the curse. Every sin of men and angels will be visited with merited punishment. Divine holiness is unsullied in the pardon of the sin of believers, nay, it is rendered infinitely more illustrious in the death of Christ. Now, Sir, is an infinitely holy God, the God of impostors? No, Sir, he is the dread of the wise and the virtuous, and cannot therefore be the delight of men who could have no refuge from his vengeance. If the highest human virtue dare not meet such a God, how could deceivers escape his wrath? Here is an infinitely holy God, yet such a God is naturally the aversion of all men. It is then a self-evident truth that this character of God came from himself.

CONCLUSION.

Such, Sir, are some of the attributes of the God of the Scriptures. What is your god to this God? Here is a God who must be the true God, because he is perfect in every attribute. That cannot be the true God, a greater than whom it is possible to conceive. That cannot be God, whose attributes are capable of additional perfection. Now the god of the wisdom of this world is imperfect in many of his attributes, and I have here shown one infinitely perfect. Can it then be a question which of these is the true God? Shall imposture and ignorance invent an infinitely perfect God, while wisdom and virtue fail? Shall I give up my God, the harmony of whose attributes secures my salvation, for yours, who cannot look upon me with an eye of pity, without being at war with himself?

Then, Sir, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. In it alone the character of the true God is manifested to the world. I cannot read a page of the Scriptures without seeing proofs that they are not the work of man; but the character of God manifested in the atonement, independent of all other proofs, demonstrates the truth of the gospel. It is intrinsically light. It is utterly impossible to understand it, and not believe it. It is impossible to see God, and not believe him to be God. But here God is seen. He that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father. The glory of God shines in his face. The view of this perfect character overwhelms the soul with evidence irresistible as the light of heaven. A man may as well look upon the sun, and yet be uncertain whether he sees that luminary, as discern the harmony and infinite perfection of this character, and doubt whether this is the true God. This is the reason why the gospel is called light in the Scriptures. This is the reason that the knowledge of God is represented as amounting to the same thing with the belief of it. It cannot be known without being credited. The plan of salvation here revealed, not only harmonizes the Divine attributes, but appears absolutely necessary, for the practical illustration of the Divine character. Had sin never entered, mercy could have had no scope, justice could have had neither operation nor adequate reparation. Love would have wanted an opportunity of manifesting its infinite perfection. Sovereignty would have been totally hid. Holiness could not have been seen in the same strong light. Without the atonement, God could not have been seen in all the glory of his perfect character. It is not an after thought to repair an evil that could not have been prevented. It is the only light in which the lustre of the Divine character could appear.

If, then, the knowledge of God is the noblest branch of philosophy, the gospel is the most noble science in the world. Here alone is to be found the knowledge of the true God. Philosophers, as well as infidels, are in the habit of looking on Christians with contempt. It is the contempt of the rustic for the Copernican system. The weakest and most illiterate Christian knows more of the most excellent of all sciences, than the greatest philosopher who is ignorant of the gospel. The Christian is the only man on earth who knows God. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."

CONFESSIONS OF INFIDELS

IN

FAVOUR OF CHRISTIANITY.

UNDERSTANDING that without any addition to the price of this publication, there is room for a few additional paragraphs, I know not how I can better occupy the space, and conclude this little work, in which I have felt much interest and pleasure, than by collecting and recording a few of the confessions of infidels to the truth and power of Christianity. I do not speak of men, who, having been born and educated in infidelity, from conviction become believers. There have been many such distinguished persons both in this country, and on the Continent of Europe, from the days of Lord Rochester downwards, the celebrated noblemen, who, laying his hand upon the Bible, emphatically said, "The only grand objection to this book, is a bad life." I do not speak of such persons. It is to be expected they should lift up a strong testimony in behalf of the truth, which after a long estrangement they have at length found. I allude to men who lived and died infidels; who would not have given the testimony which they rendered, if they had not been thrown off their guard by the power of conscience, and constrained to it; who probably afterwards, would have been glad to recall the *secret* which they had confessed, when aware how it might be turned to the disadvantage of their system. I allude to Bolingbroke, and Blount, and Paine, and Byron, and men of the same school. Of course the truth of revelation is not affected by their confessions, or by the want of them. The Bible would have been equally Divine—all the arguments employed in the preceding Tracts equally just and conclusive—though their reproach and obloquy of the Scriptures had been uniform and unbroken; but it is an additional testimony in behalf of Christianity, and a very strong because a reluctant and impartial one, when the very leaders of infidelity are constrained to speak favourably of its character; and yet strange to say, I believe there is scarcely an eminent adverse writer, who has not in the providence of God been led to admit enough, logically pursued, almost to close his mouth upon the subject of revelation altogether. So great is the power of conscience in the worst—so hopelessly inconsistent and absurd is infidelity. Hence also we see that Deists are inexcusable in their unbelief. They show that they know enough of the truth to condemn them. Lord Bolingbroke, one of the most accomplished Deistical writers, says:—

"No religion ever appeared in the world, whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind, as Christianity. No system can be more simple and plain than that of natural religion as it stands in the gospel. The system of religion which Christ published, and his Evangelists recorded, is a complete system to all the purposes of religion, natural and revealed. Christianity, as it stands in the gospel, contains not only a complete, but a very plain system of religion. The gospel is in all cases one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity."

After such confessions as these, one could scarcely see any very consistent ground upon which, as a good man, he could oppose so excellent a religion, especially as he could not pretend to substitute any thing better in its room. The same writer speaks with approbation of Christ blaming his disciples for wishing to call fire from heaven against the Samaritans, and declares "that the miracles wrought by him in the mild and beneficent spirit of Christianity, tended to the good of mankind." Also, that the pernicious effects of persecution "have not been caused by the gospel, but by the system raised upon it; not by the revelations of God, but by the inventions of men." Also, that the simplicity and plainness of the Christian system of faith and practice, "showed that it was designed to be the religion of mankind, and manifested likewise the Divinity of its original." And yet after all these things, he charges those with impiety, "who would impose upon us as the word of God, a book, which scarce contains any thing that is not repugnant to the wisdom, power, and other attributes of a Supreme all-perfect Being."!!

I might refer to Blount, a well known infidel writer, who is constrained to confess that "undoubtedly in our travels to the other world, the common road is the safest; and though Deism is a good manuring of a man's conscience, yet certainly if joined with Christianity, it will produce the most plentiful crop." Is this not an acknowledgment that it is not safe to trust to Deism alone; that if we would be safe or prosperous, we must add revelation?

The CONFESSIONS of Rousseau, as to his own character, are well known. A more base and presumptuous profligate, on his own showing, perhaps never existed. The following is *a confession* of a very different nature. In it he not only draws out a strong argument in behalf of the Divine character and mission of Christ, but condemns and exposes his brother infidels by eulogizing those Sacred Writings on which they heap every term of contempt and reproach. He is at least as good a judge of writers and of writings as Paine. It may seem strange how one who could express himself in the following just and beautiful

words, should still have remained an infidel; until we remember that the true seat of infidelity is the *heart*, not the *head;* and that Rousseau felt the power of Rochester's strongest objection to the Bible, "a bad life."

"I will confess to you," says he, "that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction: how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scripture! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the Sacred Personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary good man, loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking, that all the Christian fathers perceived it.

"What prepossession, what blindness must it be, to compare Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus, to Jesus, the son of Mary? What an infinite disproportion there is between them? Socrates dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice: he had only to say therefore what they had done, and to reduce their example to precepts. Aristides had been just, before Socrates defined justice: Leonidas had given up his life for his country, before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty: the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety: before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example. The greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people upon earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty, without obviating it; it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that only one should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."—*Emilius.*

I may next appeal to Paine. On putting him into the witness-box he confesses, after all the scorn and obloquy to which he had given utterance against revelation, that "Jesus Christ was a virtuous and an amiable man; that the morality which he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind; that though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers many years before, and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any."

If the morality of Christ be so good, so much better than any which this world has been able to find after the labour and ingenuity of six thousand years, why attempt to explode the gospel on which it rests, and without whose peculiar doctrines it is but a name? If "Jesus Christ was a virtuous and amiable man," would he assume what did not belong to him, and attempt to deceive mankind? Strange virtue and amiability this!

I conclude with unhappy Byron. In his own emphatic language, he says, "If a man was ever God, or God man, Jesus Christ was both." What praise short of actually receiving and honouring Christ as the Son of God, could be greater? On the blank leaf of his Bible, were found after his death, the following lines in his own hand-writing:—

> "Within this wondrous volume lies
> The mystery of mysteries:
> Thrice happy they, of human race,
> To whom our God has given the grace
> To read, to mark, to learn to pray,
> To lift the latch, and force the way!
> But better had they ne'er been born,
> Who read to doubt, and read to scorn."

I believe these lines are not the writing of Lord Byron, but of another modern poet. But his adopting them, and transcribing them into the blank leaf of his Bible, is as strong if not a stronger proof that he felt and adopted the sentiment, than if he had actually been the author.

Nor is it Christianity alone to the excellence of which infidels have unwittingly confessed; they have sometimes borne testimony to the wisdom of its means of propagation. Thus does Gibbon testify to the importance of *public worship*, one of the great Scripture appointments for the preservation and extension of true religion. "The devotion of the poet or the philosopher may be secretly nourished by prayer, meditation, and study; but the exercise of public worship appears to be the only solid foundation of the religious sentiments of the people, which derive their force from imitation and habit; the interruption of that public exercise may consummate in the period of a few years, the important work of a *national revolution*. The memory of theological opinions cannot be long preserved without the artificial aids of priests and of books."*

Nor does this testimony stand alone. Dr Adam

* Decline and Fall, Vol. iv. p. 83.

Smith, the celebrated author of the *Wealth of Nations*, who though he expressed some fine views in the first edition of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, pointing by the light of nature to the Scripture doctrine of atonement, may yet unhappily be pronounced an infidel, in as much as he said of the great sceptic Hume, "that he came as near as human frailty admits, to the idea of a perfectly wise and good man;" even Smith, I say, testifies to the importance of Christianity and its means, when, in a letter to a friend, he says of Sabbath schools, though then but in their infancy, "No plan promises to effect a change of manners with equal ease and simplicity since the days of the apostles." What is the moral changing power in the Sabbath school? It is the gospel of Christ presented in an attractive form to children. And what are Christian churches but larger schools for a more advanced class, where substantially the same instructions and impressions are communicated? Is this not the testimony of infidelity, and philosophy, and political economy, to the value of the despised gospel of salvation?

I cannot better conclude than by quoting the testimony of the same writer on the doctrine of atonement, above referred to, one of the great doctrines on which the gospel of free salvation rests.

"If we consult our natural sentiments, we are apt to fear lest, before the holiness of God, vice should appear to be more worthy of punishment, than the weakness and imperfection of human virtue can ever seem to be of reward. Man, when about to appear before a Being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the presence of his fellow-creatures, he may often justly elevate himself, and may often have reason to think highly of his own character and conduct, compared to the still greater imperfection of theirs. But the case is quite different when he is about to appear before his infinite Creator. To such a Being, he can scarce imagine that his littleness and weakness should ever seem to be the proper object either of esteem or of reward. But he can easily conceive how the numberless violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, should render him the proper object of aversion and punishment; neither can he see any reason why the Divine indignation should not be let loose, without any restraint, upon so vile an insect, as he is sensible that he himself must appear to be. If he would still hope for happiness, he is conscious that he must entreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition at the thought of his past conduct, are, upon this account, the sentiments which become him, and seem to be the only means which he has left for appeasing that wrath, which he knows he has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these; and naturally fears lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime, by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other atonement, he imagines must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the Divine justice can be reconciled to his manifold offences. The doctrines of revelation coincide in every respect with those original anticipations of nature; and, as they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they show us, at the same time, that the most powerful intercession has been made, and that the most dreadful atonement has been paid for our manifold transgressions and iniquities."

Who reading this, and not aware of the author, would not have imagined that he was perusing the page of some able analytic Christian divine? And yet, these are the words of one who pronounced David Hume to have come as perfectly near to the idea of a great and good man, as human frailty admits of! Christians may have their inconsistencies; but it would seem, the superior and boasted reason of Infidelity does not protect her from her full share of them, and that in the grossest form.

JOHN G. LORIMER.

THE END.

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PLAIN REASONS

FOR BEING

A CHRISTIAN.

BY

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PLAIN REASONS FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN.

Introduction.—As I was born of parents who bore the Christian name, and was instructed by them from my earliest infancy in the principles and duties of Christianity, though this in itself is no reason why I should believe and submit to it, yet I think, in gratitude to them for their care in my education, and from the deference I owe to their natural authority over me, I am bound to examine the religion in which they have brought me up, that I may know whether it be consistent with the truth and reason of things, and, consequently, worthy my acceptation and belief.

I am, indeed, abundantly persuaded, that religion ought to be my own free and rational choice, and that conviction, and not human authority, must be the rule of my judgment concerning it; and as I was directed by my parents to examine and judge for myself, and find the Christian religion in particular appealing to the reason and consciences of mankind, I have endeavoured to make the most impartial inquiry I am capable of, and upon the strictest examination.

I. The reason of my mind tells me, that there is a God,—that is, an eternal, all-perfect Being, the original cause and preserver of all things, the great author of all the relations and dependences of things upon each other, the creator, proprietor, and therefore natural lord and governor of all the reasonable creation.

From hence it follows, that all creatures who are capable of understanding their derivation from him, their dependence on him, and their relation to him, are indispensably and necessarily obliged to pay him those acknowledgments and services, which result from, and are suitable and proper to, their respective circumstances and conditions.

And by consequence religion, that is, the worship and service of God, is the necessary duty of every reasonable creature, and ought to be maintained and kept up in the world; and every man in particular is bound to make choice of that religion, which appears to him most consonant to reason, and to carry in it the most evident marks of its being from God, and most agreeable to his nature and will.

II. As I find that religion is the necessary duty of every reasonable creature, I am farther convinced of my obligation to make use of all the helps I can, to understand wherein the nature of it doth consist. And upon inquiry, I can think of but two ways by which I can come to the knowledge of it; and these are, either the dictates of my own mind and reason, or some informations, discoveries, and revelations from God, the great object of my religious worship.

The reason of my mind is that which renders me capable of discerning what is fit and unfit in disposition and behaviour; and from hence I derive the notion, and infer the reality of *moral* obligation: and when I farther consider the first independent mind as the author of these relations, and fitnesses which arise from them, I am convinced that it is his will that I should act suitable to them, and that I offend when I do not; and from hence I infer the certainty of *religious* obligation. And since this moral and religious obligation owes its rise only to my reflections upon the nature of man, and the relation I stand in to God and other beings, this is properly natural religion, or the religion of nature.

Now, though the religion of nature be prior to and distinct from revealed religion, and gives the characters by which we are to judge of the truth of revelation; yet the insufficiency of it, and, therefore, the expediency of a divine revelation, to lead men into a due knowledge of the principles, duties, and advantages of religion, appears,—

From that gross ignorance of God and duty which sprung from the general corruption and degeneracy of mankind, which rendered it highly improbable that any one in such circumstances should arise, who should be able to make the necessary discoveries of God and his perfections, and with clearness and solidity to represent men's obligations in their proper extent and compass; at least, not without those mixtures of weakness and superstition which might occasion the vicious and prejudiced to disregard his instructions, and thus abate the general success of them.

But if we could suppose his doctrines to be pure and unmixed, it is not probable they would have a general, or indeed any considerable influence over the strong bias that vice universally practised had given to men, without the marks of a proper authority to awaken them to consideration; especially as those doctrines could not but want the motives and encouragements proportionate to such an effect.

It is indeed probable, that in such a situation men might be led to see, that by acting contrary to the reason and fitness of things, they had offended the first and most perfect mind: the natural consequence of this would be fear of punishment. This fear must be infinite and boundless, as the power of God is conceived to be unlimited, and the nature and duration of the punishment would be absolutely unknown. A consideration highly disfavourable to all endeavours to break off their sinful habits, and attain to the contrary habits of virtue.

However, if we could suppose men by such a fear of punishment persuaded to repentance—that is, to cease from acting contrary to the fitness of things, and to conform themselves for the future to it,—their former violation of this unalterable law of reason would remain, and cannot in strict speaking be undone by any better behaviour afterwards; and of consequence their fears of punishment must remain.

If we suppose that men's natural notions of the divine goodness, and the forbearance that God exercises in the course of his providence, would lead them to think it probable that repentance would secure them from the dreaded punishment; such probability would, in the nature of things, be mixed with the greatest uncertainty; especially because, upon consideration, men, in the circumstances we now place them, would find, after all, their deviations from the law of reason many, and their virtue imperfect; and, therefore, there would still be uneasy suspicions whether it be consistent with the wisdom of the supreme governor, entirely to remit the punishment due to such repeated offences.

If we suppose that men might reason themselves into this firm persuasion and hope, that a return to a sincere, though imperfect virtue, would secure them from the deserved evil; yet this will not lay a solid foundation to expect that happiness, and those marks of the divine favour, which might have been hoped for, if there had been no deviations from the rule of right and fit. Here the light of nature is at an entire loss, and can never give men the necessary assurances in this important article.

If it should appear inconsistent with the perfections of Deity not to make a distinction between those who return to virtue, and those who obstinately continue to act contrary to the fitness of things; yet the degree and manner of doing it will still remain doubtful and uncertain, this being wholly dependent on the unknown pleasure and wisdom of God. And of consequence, the light of nature cannot determine whether an imperfect virtue may not have suitable degrees of punishment in another state; or if the probability should preponderate on the other side, that God would reward a sincere, though imperfect virtue, reason could never assure us of what nature that reward should be, nor how long would be its continuance.

As every man finds himself liable to death, a resurrection would scarcely be made appear by the light of nature probable, much less a resurrection accompanied with such favourable alterations as the Christian religion discovers. In a word, if the light of nature could assure me of a future state, it could never make me certain that it should be a state of rewards, since the virtue of this life is so very imperfect, that the other life might prove a new state of farther trial.

But if it could go so far as to render it probable, that it should be a state of recompense; yet, wherein the rewards of it consist, and how long their continuance and duration shall be, it is so little capable of giving any distinct account of, that the greatest and wisest of men, who had no other guide but this, appear to have lived and died in the greatest uncertainties about them,—a full proof, that the light of nature is not sufficient to instruct us in these important articles, with any clearness and certainty: the consequence of which is, that men would want the proper arguments and motives to become virtuous with steadiness and constancy, against all the difficulties and temptations of a general and universal degeneracy.

III. Since, therefore, the natural reason of my mind appears thus greatly defective and insufficient, I have considered the other method of discovering the will of God, and the principles and duties of religion, namely, immediate revelation from God himself; and as this involves no contradiction in the nature of the thing, it must be possible to him, to whom belongs supreme and unlimited power. "Shall not he that made the eye see?" He that gave us all our conversable powers, shall he not be able to converse with us himself? Shall not the Father of spirits, who is intimately present to every being, have an access to his own offspring, so as to assure the mind that it is he himself, by such evidence, as shall make it unreasonable to deny, or impossible to doubt it? If men can make themselves known, and discover their secret thoughts to each other, surely God can make himself known to men; else we must suppose his power more bounded than theirs, and that

he wants a real perfection which they are possessed of.

And as this is possible, my reason farther tells me it is highly desirable, the better to instruct me what God is, and what I am myself; what I must do, and what I shall be: to save men the labour of a slow and tedious compass of observation, experience, and argument, which every one is not fit for, and which those who are would be glad to be assisted in; to free me from the uncertainties and fears of my mind, that arise from the consciousness of guilt, the sense of my being accountable, and the apprehensions I have of a future state; to regulate my conduct, and guide me with safety in the midst of prevailing ignorance and darkness, the mistakes and corruptions of mankind, the snares of bad examples, and the numerous temptations to folly and vice; to establish my hopes, by fixing the rule of worship, settling the conditions of pardon, assuring me of necessary assistance, and promising such rewards as are proper to support me under all the difficulties of my present duty. These things "the world by wisdom knew not;" they were vain and mistaken in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened.

And as such a revelation is both possible and desirable, the probability that there hath been one, may be fairly argued from the universal ignorance and corruption that hath overspread the world, the characters of God as Father and Governor of mankind, the acknowledged goodness and equity of his nature, the sudden and astonishing reformation that hath once been in the world, the numerous pretences that have been made to revelation in all ages and nations, which seem to argue the general consent of mankind, as to the expediency and reality of it, and its necessity to give religion its proper certainty, authority, and force.

If, then, there be any religion in the world that fairly makes out its title to be a revelation from God, by such internal characters belonging to it, and such external proofs attending it, which are fit and proper in themselves to convince a reasonable and impartial inquirer, and may be justly expected in a matter of such importance; I am bound to acknowledge and submit to such a religion, and to receive it under the honourable character of a divine revelation. And as the Christian religion makes its pretensions to such a character and authority, I have endeavoured fairly to examine the proofs and evidence that attend it, as they are contained in those books which are known by the name of the New Testament, to which Christians appeal, as to the infallible rule of their faith and practice, and the sole judge of all controversies in their religion. And upon the most unprejudiced inquiry, I find, —

IV. That there is the highest reason to believe, that these books are authentic and genuine, there being the same, or rather greater proofs, of their being written by the persons whose names they bear, and to whom they are ascribed, than any other ancient books have, though of the clearest credit, and most unquestionable authority. This is supported by the testimony of many writers, who either were the contemporaries of the authors of the books of the New Testament, or lived immediately after them; who frequently quote and refer to them, both amongst Christians themselves, who transcribe many parts of them in their works, and amongst the Jews and Heathens, who expressly mention them as the authors of the books ascribed to them, though they had the greatest aversion to the Christian religion; their interest obliged them to disprove it, and they had all the opportunity and power in their hands to do so. So that here there is an universal agreement, without any contrary claim, or pretension to other authors.

That the accounts they have given us in these writings are genuine and true, I argue from the characters and circumstances of the writers themselves. They were persons of undoubted integrity, as appears by the innocence of their lives, their solemn appeals to God, the strict obligations they were under to truth by the principles of their own religion, their inculcating truth and sincerity upon others by the noblest motives, their having no worldly interest to bias them, and their cheerfully sealing the testimony they gave by their blood.

They had the most certain knowledge of the things of which they wrote, which were either doctrines that they received immediately from Christ himself, or the inspiration of his Spirit; or facts, done in their own times, and of which they were either eye-witnesses, or principal agents, and which have been preserved by public memorials and solemn rites, that have obtained in all ages of the Christian Church.

Their education, capacities, and circumstances of life, rendered it impossible for them to invent so rational, consistent, and grand a scheme as the Christian religion contains; they wrote at divers times and places, upon different occasions, sudden emergencies, and important controversies, which prevented any reasonable suspicions of combination or united fraud.

The several accounts they give of the people and affairs of the time in which, according to their own relation, the things they report happened, entirely agree with other writers of undoubted authority, which is a very strong presumption of their being authentic and agreeable to truth.

That these writings are still the same,

without any material alterations, is evident from the great value and credit they have been always in amongst Christians, who ever esteemed them as the rule of their faith and life, and the ground of their comfort and hope; from their being publicly read in the Christian churches as a part of their solemn worship; their being early translated from authentic copies, which long continued in the Christian Church, into most of the known languages of the world, and the harmony and agreement of such translations; from the quotations made from them, still remaining in ancient writers; from the constant appeals made to them by the various sects that appeared amongst Christians, in all matters controverted by them; for which reason they could not be corrupted in any material points, either by common consent, or by any particular parties amongst themselves. So that they have no marks of fraud and imposture upon them, but are attended with every character of their being genuine and pure; and have been handed down in the main without any adulteration or mixture, through many successions of ages, notwithstanding the violence of persecution, the strict search and inquiry into them, the errors and corruptions that have been introduced into the Church, the interest of crafty, superstitious, and designing men, to add or to take from them, and the endeavours of tyrants utterly to destroy them by their own intrinsic excellency and evidence, and the special protection and care of Providence.

Upon these considerations I am abundantly convinced, that the books of the New Testament have all the evidence which any ancient writings have or can have of their being authentic and genuine; and that therefore it is unreasonable to call this matter into question, when so many other writings are universally owned upon much less evidence; no man of common sense pretending to doubt of the genuineness and truth of them. And, therefore, whatsoever account these writings give of the nature of the Christian religion, I am bound to receive as the true account, and to examine its authority by those facts which they relate as the proper evidence and proof of it. Now, as I should naturally expect to find in a revelation that is really from God, suitable and worthy accounts of his perfections and attributes; so,—

V. I farther find, to my great satisfaction, that the things spoken of God in the Christian revelation, are suitable to those notions of him, which I can prove the truth of by the reason of my own mind, and which have been entertained by the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations of the world. The light of nature can firmly demonstrate, and the most thoughtful and learned heathens have agreed in, the necessity of God's existence, the absolute perfection of his nature, his immensity and absolute unchangeableness; his comprehensive knowledge; his infinite wisdom, and his almighty power; the rectitude of his nature; his boundless and extensive goodness; and his impartial equity and justice; his being the creator of the world; his being the supreme lord and governor of universal nature, and the father and friend of mankind; his being a lover of virtue, and determined finally to accept and reward it.

Now, the records of the Christian revelation are so far from containing any thing contrary to these apprehensions, that they confirm, enlarge, and enforce them. They speak of his necessary existence in a noble and comprehensive way. They describe him as filling all things, and as without the least "variableness or shadow of turning;" as "the King immortal, invisible, and eternal;" as having life in himself; as the searcher of the heart, and knowing all things; as God only, that is, supremely, infinitely wise; as irresistible in power; as absolutely holy; as rich in goodness; as just in his procedure; as the Creator of the worlds visible and invisible; as upholding all things by the word of his power; as the observer of men's actions — a lover of their virtue — and ready to assist them in it, and reward it. It gives the noblest representations of his claims of worship and obedience from all his reasonable creatures, of his peculiar love to mankind, and his special favour to all the virtuous and good. It describes him to our minds as seated on his throne of grace; as sending a person of the highest character, to lead men by his example and instructions to knowledge and piety, to peace of conscience and eternal happiness; as dispensing by him pardon to the penitent, comfort to the afflicted, hope to the miserable, and life to sinners under the condemnation of sin and death; as having appointed a day for universal judgment; as judging all in righteousness according to their deeds, and the advantages they enjoy; as the final punisher of the impenitently wicked; and as the everlasting portion and reward of all who, "by a patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality." These representations of God, my mind and reason highly approve of; and when I read them in the Christian records, they awaken my admiration, fill my soul with the warmest love, and excite within me a becoming reverence and godly fear.

VI. As the Christian religion gives the noblest representations of the attributes of God, I farther find that it requires the most rational and excellent worship of him, the "worshippers whom the Father" declares he "now seeks," being such only as "worship him in spirit and in truth." The rule of the

gospel extends only to decency and order; but contains no directions about external pomp and pageantry. The method of worship it prescribes is not so much by positive rites and ceremonies, that have no intrinsic worth and excellency in them, as by a steady belief and worthy apprehensions of his perfections and providence, by fervent love, by reverence and godly fear, by hope in his mercy, by submission to his will, by the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, by gratitude, adoration, and praise, and by fervent humble supplication and prayer. In a word, by the exercise of all holy dispositions, by purity of soul, and a constant careful imitation of God in all the virtues of a holy life.

I find all the writings of the New Testament abound with precepts of this kind; and as to such positive institutions as are enjoined by it, they are but few, and these not burdensome in their observance; not pompous and costly, not tending to, and encouraging of superstition; but plain and significant, designed either to represent the peculiar purity of the Christian profession, when men take it on them, or as memorials to perpetuate the remembrance of those important facts, upon the certainty and knowledge of which the authority and efficacy of Christianity doth entirely depend: and at the same time suited in every part of them to promote the purposes of piety, and universal fervent charity; appointed as obligations upon men, to be more careful and exemplary in their behaviour, and to abound in all the virtues of a good life; and to assure them on the part of God, that if they act agreeable to their obligations and professions as Christians, they shall be made partakers of the most valuable and durable blessings in his everlasting kingdom and glory.

And though these institutions are supported by the authority of an express command, yet in order to prevent all possible abuse of them, the Christian religion farther expressly declares, that whatever claims men may hereafter make to the rewards of a better world, from their having worn the name of Christ, or enjoyed the external privileges of his religion, they shall not be accepted upon this foundation; but that they themselves shall be rejected, if they are found workers of iniquity; and that none but such as fear God and work righteousness, shall receive the recompense of righteousness and glory.

And therefore I am pleased farther to observe, that as the Christian religion places the worship of God in the exercise of suitable affections, and in the regular piety and virtue of a good life, it farther lays down and inculcates such rules and precepts of substantial holiness, as are reasonable in themselves, perfect in their kind, and well approved of by my judgment and conscience. Such which I find are in their nature conducive to promote the health, the honour, the reputation, the usefulness, the worldly prosperity, the peace, and satisfaction of every individual person living and dying; such which are suited to the particular stations, characters, and circumstances of men in life; and which are therefore calculated to promote the ends of civil government, and the peace and welfare of civil society; enjoining all to cultivate and maintain the most fervent charity and love, to be merciful in disposition and practice, to follow the things that make for peace, not to receive men to doubtful disputations, not to censure or judge one another upon account of differences in opinions, but that such as are strong should bear with the weak, and all endeavour to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; doing good for evil, loving and praying for our enemies, and cheerfully forgiving offences and injuries against us. So that however Christianity may have been abused by some, to support a secular interest, I am abundantly convinced it is not from any tendency of its precepts to disturb the order of civil government, or alter the constitution and form of it amongst any nations of the world; the great view of it being to engage men to govern their passions, to be of the most just, generous, and friendly dispositions to others, to discharge the duties of their respective stations, either employing themselves in honest labours or public services; magistrates ruling diligently as ministers of God for good, and subjects living quiet lives in all godliness and honesty.

VII. As the worship which the Christian religion enjoins is thus worthy of God, and all its precepts for the conduct of life thus rational and perfect; so I farther find the motives it proposes are weighty and sufficient, if duly considered and attended to, to determine men in the choice of that course which it recommends; all of them worthy the perfections of the blessed God, and suited to the circumstances of his degenerate, offending, and guilty creatures.

The assurance of pardon through the blood of Christ, and of the assistance of his good Spirit under all the difficulties of our present duty, are exceedingly favourable, and carry in them the noblest encouragement to obnoxious and disabled sinners, when they entertain the thoughts of returning to God their sovereign, and happiness; and indeed absolutely necessary to reconcile them to, and render them successful in, such an attempt. For what heart can any one have to begin the difficult work of breaking off his sins, and to enter upon a life of holiness, or what prospect of success, but under the comfortable assurance that his past offences shall be forgiven, and that he shall receive all necessary

assistances from God for the future, in struggling with the difficulties that attend the practice of virtue?

The intercession of so compassionate and powerful a friend with God, as Jesus Christ is represented to be, is a very firm ground of support, and inspires considerate minds with a cheerful hope of having their persons and services accepted, and of receiving all the necessary supports and blessings of life, whatever opposition they may meet with from the enemies of true religion, and even though they should be exposed to the severest persecutions upon account of their adherence to it.

The prospect and full assurance of his coming to raise the dead, and judge the world, and give eternal life, to reward his faithful followers with everlasting happiness, and to punish the wicked with an everlasting destruction, is an argument abundantly sufficient to persuade men immediately to enter upon the ways of holiness and virtue, and to engage them to persevere in them with cheerfulness to the last. Especially considering, that good men are assured that all the inconveniences of life shall be made tolerable and useful to them, and death, the dread of nature, shall be their introduction into rest, and the commencement of their felicity. In a word, the gospel sets before men every consideration to encourage virtue, and deter from vice, and gives them particularly such assurances of retributions in the other world, as that no stronger motives whatsoever can be desired or needed to make them wise, and good, and happy, if they will but suffer them to have their proper and natural influence upon their minds.

VIII. As the gospel precepts of religion and virtue, and the motives set before men to engage them to the love and practice of it, are worthy of God, and suitable to their circumstances and desires, so the peculiar doctrines of Christianity relating to Jesus Christ, the great author and dispenser of it, are such as demand the highest regard; such as no founder of any other religion could pretend to, and yet such as are entirely consistent with the principles of natural religion, and all the certain discoveries of reason; such as are sublime and grand in themselves, uniform and consistent with each other, plain and intelligible in the main and essential points; and such as add great strength and force to natural religion, as they have an entire and absolute tendency to promote godliness and virtue.

Thus it is declared of him, that he was before the formation of the world; the Word that was with God, and God; the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; that the Father by him created all things; that by him all things consist; that he came down from a state of heavenly glory to be made flesh, and dwell amongst us; that he came from the very bosom of his Father, and had that perfect and complete knowledge of his Father's will that no other messenger from him ever had or could have; that to enable him the better to reveal it to mankind, he had a body miraculously prepared for him, which was conceived, and born without sin; but in all sinless infirmities like unto his brethren, in the present suffering, afflicted state of the human nature; that in this body he chose such a condition of life as gave him an opportunity of conversing most familiarly with all sorts of persons; became an example of the most perfect purity and goodness, by his own lowliness and meekness disgracing the pride and passions of the world, and teaching men to place all real excellency and greatness in honouring the great God and Father of all, and doing good to their fellow-creatures, even to the worst and meanest of mankind.

That so much greatness should condescend to put on such a veil, and so glorious a being give such amazing proofs of goodness, is beyond all parallel. It is indeed peculiar to the character of Jesus Christ to be possessed of the glories of Deity, and yet to stoop to the lowest state of human nature; to be Lord of lords, and yet the meekest, humblest man that ever dwelt on earth; to appear amongst men under the form of a servant, and to be made of no reputation, and yet at the same time to be honoured by a voice from heaven, declaring, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

However, notwithstanding this amazing condescension, great humility, and meanness of outward form, he is represented as assuming an authority worthy the Son of God; an authority and right to settle the terms of men's acceptance with God, according as he had received power from his Father; an authority to forgive sins on earth, so as that they should be forgiven in heaven; and so to retain sins, as that they should remain unpardonable in a future state; and authority and power to send the Spirit of his Father, and constitute him the prime minister of his kingdom amongst men; that by his extraordinary and miraculous gifts he might confirm the gospel, and make it successful upon its first publication; and afterwards, in every age, continually accompany it with such impressions on the hearts of men, as, in the efficacy and design of them, should correspond to those more extraordinary gifts, which were poured out on Christians in common at their first embracing the gospel. And finally, an authority to raise the dead, and judge them when restored to life; to send all the workers of iniquity into everlasting punishment, and to reward all who sincerely believe in him and obey him, with eternal happiness.

But notwithstanding these high pretensions, it is farther declared of him, that he died the ignominious and accursed death of the cross; that he died a sacrifice for the sins of the world; that by his death he drew all men to himself, and brought to pass that great mystery of calling in the Gentiles, taking away the difference between them and the Jews, making them one household and family; thus founding his kingdom upon his own blood, and not on the blood of his enemies and opposers.

But though he died to answer these ends, yet the same records testify, that in spite of all the malice and opposition of his enemies, he rose again the third day, effectually to remove the offence and scandal of his own cross, and to give an exemplar and sure proof of the resurrection of others by his power at the end of the world; that after his resurrection he abode forty days on earth, to settle the affairs of his kingdom with his disciples, commanding them to preach his gospel, sending them forth in such a style of majesty as could never be equalled by any earthly monarch, or author of any other revelation, "all power is given me in heaven and in earth;" and assuring them that the terms upon which they should declare men acquitted or condemned, partakers of eternal life or death, under the infallible conduct of his Spirit, should be ratified and confirmed in heaven: in this sense intrusting them with, not only the erection and ordering his kingdom upon earth, but also with the keys of heaven and hell.

After this commission granted to his apostles, it is declared of him, that in their presence he ascended into the heavens, a cloud receiving him out of their sight, leading captivity captive, triumphing over those powers of darkness whose works he came into the world to destroy—spoiling those principalities and powers, those spiritual wickednesses in high places; that he was seated on his Father's right hand, angels being made subject to him, and the god of this world, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, being put under his feet, and reserved by him to be finally bruised at the judgment of the great day.

And lastly, the same records that give an account of his investiture with this high dignity and office, do, with great consistency and propriety, declare, that the Father hath committed all judgment to him; that all shall appear before his judgment seat; that when he shall come to execute this important trust, he shall appear in his own glory, and in his original form of God, all the holy angels attending him, and solemnly waiting round his tribunal. That then he shall be seated on the throne of his glory; that all nations shall be gathered before him; that he shall separate them one from another on his right hand, and on his left, pass sentence on them, and thereby determine their everlasting state; that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous be adjudged to life eternal; that he shall present them blameless before his Father's glory; and that, as the conclusion of all, he himself shall lay down all rule, and all authority and power, deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, become subject unto him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

A scheme so sublime and grand, so consistent with the prerogatives of the great God, so suitable to the high dignity and infinite merits of the Son of God, so calculated to awaken men to virtue and piety, carries in it all the characters of probability and truth, and highly deserves the most attentive consideration and regard.

IX. As these peculiar doctrines of Christianity carry their own recommendation along with them, and appear worthy to be received for their intrinsic excellency, so they come to us attended with many clear and convincing demonstrations, that it is the will of God we should regard them as truths coming from him, and as revealed to us by his special order and appointment, for our recovery, improvement, and perfection.

Jesus of Nazareth, the person from whom these doctrines receive their general name, and are called *Christian*, was called the *Christ*, because he made pretensions to a divine mission, and always thought and spoke of himself as *anointed* and empowered by God to make these discoveries of his will to men, declaring himself the Son of God, and that person whom the Jews, with whom he lived and conversed, had been all along trained up and taught to look for. And of the truth of these pretensions he gave sufficient evidence to every unprejudiced and attentive observer.

It was very wisely ordered, that just before his appearance in the world, there should arise one who should prepare men for his coming, and give notice of his approach. This John the Baptist did, preaching in the spirit and power of Elias, and saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" and though he did no miracle, yet by his virtuous and strict deportment, his self-denial, his pathetic exhortations, his bold and impartial admonitions and reproofs, he obtained the character of a great prophet. This man bare witness concerning Jesus, and the things he said of him could not but attract the eyes of men toward him, and raise great expectations from him; and the gradual accomplishment of several things which John had foretold of him was at least some evidence that Jesus was a very extraordinary person, and was suited to keep every honest and impartial mind open to any

farther proofs that Jesus might produce of his pretensions and mission from God.

And of these he gave many during his life and ministry that were beyond all reasonable exception. He wrought many great miracles, —that is, did many things evidently and confessedly above all human power and skill to effect. He healed the sick, and cured all manner of diseases, such as by all the art and efficacy of medicine had been found incurable, —inveterate palsies, and lunacies. He opened the ears of the deaf, loosed the tongues of the dumb, made the lame to walk, rendered the maimed perfect, opened the eyes of those that had been born blind, and raised the dead. These amazing works he performed in an instant, even by the speaking of a word, in the cities and towns of the country where he lived, in places of the most public resort, before multitudes of his enemies as well as friends, and at such seasons, and such particular places, on the Sabbath, and in the synagogues, as he well knew would occasion the most critical and narrow inquiry into all the circumstances of the facts. All these things he performed without any ostentation or vain-glory. In all his most public miracles there was always some circumstance or other, which plainly shewed that they were intended for the conviction of those who saw them, and not to gain applause to himself.

But besides these extraordinary works, he answered all those characters which the prophets of former ages had given of the Messiah. As he was promised under the character of "a prophet like unto Moses," but whose office was to be more general and extensive than that of Moses; as one who was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the glory of his people Israel:" he accordingly came furnished and commissioned to instruct all mankind, Jew and Gentile, in every important truth that they were concerned to know, in order to their obtaining the divine acceptance, and the happiness of a future state; commanding all nations to be discipled, taught, and proselyted, that "all men might come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved."

As he was foretold under the character of a king, as "the Son of man," to whom should "be given a kingdom, dominion, and power;" so Jesus came asserting his right to a kingdom, setting up the kingdom of God amongst men, and claiming and exercising a rightful authority over their hearts and consciences.

He appeared just at that time when a person of such a character was generally and reasonably expected; just as the sceptre was departing from Judah, and at the period fixed and determined by the prophecy of Daniel.

He came of the nation, tribe, and particular family, from which it was prophesied he should descend, being of the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, and house of David; and, by a wonderful interposition of Providence, born at Bethlehem, the place from whence was to "come forth he who was to be ruler in Israel."

When he appeared and conversed amongst men, his disposition and behaviour were suited both to the character he sustained, and to the prophecies that had been given out concerning him. He was meek and lowly in heart, holy, and without blame, so that his most inveterate and malicious enemies could not convince him of sin.

His circumstances in life were exactly such as they were foretold they should be. He was "despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He lived in want of many of the conveniences, and sometimes of the very necessaries of life, and was subject to reproach, and the most ungrateful and inhuman usage. At last he was "led as a lamb to the slaughter," suffered death as a malefactor, and was "cut off for the transgressions of the people," All this he endured without murmuring, complaining, reviling again, or threatening. His enemies and accusers, his judges, executioners, and guards, his friends and relations, and a numberless multitude of curious and inquisitive spectators, judged, saw, and knew him to be dead. He was taken from the cross, buried in his sepulchre, and yet rose again from the dead, and by this resurrection he was "declared to be the Son of God with power," beyond all possible contradiction.

During his life and ministry he had often mentioned this great event as what should certainly come to pass, resting and laying the stress of his pretensions upon it; sometimes in plain words; at other times in figurative expressions, declaring how long he should continue in the grave, and in the state of the dead, namely, three days and three nights, — that is, part of three days and three nights. Accordingly, on the third day he rose, and shewed himself alive to his disciples, whom he had chosen to be his stated companions with this particular view, that they might be qualified to testify the most remarkable facts which occurred in his life; and that they might be proper and unexceptionable witnesses of his resurrection from the dead.

And as they have unanimously declared this to the world, there is no just reason to object to their testimony. For in asserting this, they assert what they so knew themselves, as that they could not be deceived in. They knew the person, features, manner, and speech of Jesus. They were allowed to handle him, that they might be sure they were not imposed on by an airy phantasm, and delusive appearance only. They had free and familiar converse with him, and that

repeatedly in the space of forty days. He discoursed to them largely on subjects, of which he had before his death given them more general hints, and renewed the great promise he had made them in his former life, of pouring out his Spirit on them ; with this additional circumstance, that it should be made good to them not many days from the time of his speaking to them.

Upon these accounts, it cannot be supposed that these witnesses could be deceived themselves in what they relate ; nor is there any reason to think that they attempted to deceive others, by bearing witness to the truth of a known imposture. For as to what appears, they were persons of honest minds, not crafty, covetous, ambitious, and designing : they had no temptation to invent such a story, or publish it if they had not known it to be true. They had no prospect of gain or worldly grandeur, however successful they might prove in propagating the story. The doctrine they taught enjoins the strictest regard to veracity, and the greatest abhorrence of fraud and guile, under the most solemn and awful sanctions. Their testimony was uniform and consistent in all the parts of it. If the story had been forged, those who opposed and endeavoured to stifle it, might easily have detected the forgery : the surest, nearest, and plainest way to expose the authors, abettors, and believers of it, and to prevent its spreading in the world. But instead of this, they loaded the witnesses with hardships of every kind. Reproach, shame, poverty, bonds, imprisonments, scourgings, &c. were the arguments made use of by their enemies to stop their mouths. Nothing of this kind silenced them, or made any one of them to retract. They cheerfully underwent the severest persecutions, and submitted to death itself, rather than they would deny or conceal what they knew to be a truth of the last importance to mankind.

In short, a testimony so circumstanced as this is, in any other case, never did, nor ever can be disputed or disbelieved ; but in any age and place would, and in any time or country still will meet with a general credit and reception from all reasonable and fair men, without any cavil, hesitation, or demur.

As Jesus Christ did in his lifetime, and after his resurrection, promise his disciples, that they should receive his Spirit, or power from on high ; he accordingly poured it down upon them in all its extraordinary and miraculous gifts ; and thereby manifestly proved his ascension to the right hand of power and glory.

Besides this, the divine mission and authority of Jesus Christ is farther established by the actual and exact accomplishment of those important events, which he expressly and clearly foretold many years before they came to pass.

He publicly declared before multitudes that heard him as well as his own disciples, that the city of Jerusalem, and its glory the temple, should, in a few years, be utterly laid waste and destroyed ; and that the gospel, which was at first offered to the Jews and rejected by them, should be taken away from amongst them, and be tendered to the Gentiles ; and that persons of all nations and languages under heaven should receive and become proselytes to his religion, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against his Church, but that he would be with it to the end of the world.

These remarkable events, though at the time when he foretold them they were far from being probable, though there appeared no signs or tokens that should lead to such a conjecture, did nevertheless come to pass exactly according to his prediction. Before the generation of men, to whom he addressed himself, had passed away, Jerusalem became desolate, and the nation was destroyed ; and the history of that dreadful calamity, as it is related by Josephus, doth remarkably agree with the prophetic account given by Jesus concerning it, as it is very circumstantially recorded by the evangelists.

And after the apostles had in vain attempted to persuade the Jewish nation and people to receive the Christian religion, they turned themselves to the Gentiles, who, in almost every place where the gospel was preached to them, shewed a better disposition, and minds more open to evidence and conviction ; multitudes of the Gentiles receiving the word with gladness and all readiness of mind.

And notwithstanding the tares that have been sown — the strifes and divisions which have been excited and fomented—the declensions and degeneracy of many Christian professors — the persecutions with which the avowed enemies of the Christian Church have frequently worried it,—and the antichristian spirit that for many ages hath shewn itself amongst the greater part of those who have borne the Christian name ; notwithstanding Christianity hath been often moved from one place to another, and in many nations entirely suppressed ; notwithstanding the objections that have been urged against the doctrines of Christianity, and the contempt, ridicule, and insolence with which the person and miracles of Jesus have been treated, yet still the religion of Christ continues unto this day, in its external profession and internal efficacy, —not by might nor power, but by the Spirit, and favour, and blessing of God, and its own native excellency and intrinsic worth.

From these considerations I am even forced to acknowledge and reverence the divine character and mission of the Son of God, and

to receive his religion in all the parts and branches of it as a revelation immediately from God.

X. As Jesus Christ himself, the great founder of the Christian religion, had this full evidence and substantial proof of his own authority and commission from God; and that he was a man approved of God, by wonders, signs, and miracles, which God did by him; and as he was sent to publish a new institution of religion, not only for one nation and people, but for all nations and people of the earth: so the same books which shew this, farther shew, that he took care to propagate and confirm the religion he taught by choosing the most proper means and instruments to carry on and perfect it, and persuade men to receive it.

And therefore, before he left the world himself, and ended his own personal ministry, he chose several persons to be his apostles and messengers, who should afterwards publish his religion to the world, with sufficient authority and qualifications for so great a work as the delivering a new revelation and rule of religion to mankind.

By a near acquaintance and constant conversation with him, they were proper persons to be credible witnesses of all his miracles, and in particular of his resurrection, that great evidence that he was approved of God! and farther, to acquaint the world what were the truths he taught, and what were the rules of worship he appointed, having had such opportunity to know them by his personal and private instructions.

To give the greater weight to what they should teach the world as his religion, he gave them authority, by a solemn commission, in virtue of that full power that was given him in heaven and earth, to teach all nations, and make them his disciples, and to enter them as such by baptism, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, requiring them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them. And such authority and commission from one already approved a teacher sent from God, justly gave credit to what they should teach in his name, or declare concerning him, either as to what they had seen themselves, or received in command from him to deliver unto others.

But besides this, their authority and qualifications to publish this religion to all nations are evidenced by many other plain and convincing proofs. For they had not only the benefit of his personal instructions and directions all the time of their conversation with him, but he had promised to send to them the Spirit of truth after his removal from them, and that this Spirit, when he came, should guide them into all truths, farther necessary to perfect his institution of religion. This promise was again solemnly repeated, after his resurrection, to his apostles, whom, being assembled together with them, he commanded, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, "but wait for the promise of the Father, which," says he, "ye have heard of me; for John truly baptized you with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence; and ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

This remarkable promise was soon after accomplished; for whilst they were together upon the day of Pentecost, there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, though before they had been utterly unacquainted with them. Their minds were in an instant illuminated, and filled with a clear and distinct knowledge of those important truths, which to that time had been absolutely, or in a great measure unknown to them. They had at the same time conveyed to them a power of healing all manner of diseases, of doing miracles, even of raising the dead to life, of prophecy, or predicting future events, and of conferring these extraordinary gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost upon others, which was so commonly done, and so well known, that Simon, who by his sorceries had deceived many to account of him as the great power of God, offered money to the apostles, that he like them might have the power to give the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands.

These gifts of the Spirit of God were such in their nature, as no human power or wisdom could confer; such as none of the exorcists or sorcerers of those times, with all their cunning and art, management and reputation amongst the people, could counterfeit. They were so many and public, as gave the most clear and undeniable evidence of the apostles' mission from God and Christ, greatly animated them in the work they were called to, and contributed much to their success. This effusion of the Spirit was a public affirmance of their private testimony concerning Christ, and added the weight of prophecy and miracles to the credibility of true and faithful witnesses.

But besides all this, the manner of their instruction greatly recommended the testimony they gave, and the doctrines they taught. This was in all respects such as it became the best of men, and the wisest of religions to use. Never did men give greater instances of honesty and sincerity, and a firm persuasion of the truth of what they taught. Never did men appear more disinterested and

faithful in what they declared they had received from God. In all distant places, and on many different occasions, there still appeared an exact harmony of doctrine, and a constant union in promoting the same cause; so that the same Spirit of truth appeared to direct them all, as they had all received the same spirit of power. Their hearts and lives were under the constant direction and influence of the power and spirit of real religion. As they had all received the same miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, they were all animated with the same just and regular zeal. All shewed the same firmness of mind, tempered with the same modesty, meekness, and humility. Their own religion gave them the noblest supports under the many and great sufferings they endured; and that no proof of their sincerity and faithfulness might be wanting, they sealed the truth of the doctrines they taught with their blood, and gave up their own lives to the hopes of that future happiness they proposed in the name of their Master to others.

And lastly, as truth and religion stand in no need of artifice and violence, the apostles openly renounced all such methods of propagating the religion of Christ, directing men to hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. They imposed on no man's judgment, they openly disclaimed all dominion over their faith and consciences, they reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, and instead of forcing their own interpretations upon them, commended them for searching the Scriptures whether the things were so. With all the authority their commission gave them, confirmed by many signs and wonders, they yet appealed to the judgments of men by fair arguments, and aimed at persuading the conscience by the conviction of reason, not to overbear it by the force of authority.

It was indeed highly fit and necessary, that when they had approved the religion they taught to men's consciences, and their own authority and commission by sufficient evidence, they, as the ministers and apostles of Christ, should both command and exhort in his name, and publish the rules of his religion as his commands, of binding obligation and authority; for this reason, that he is the lawgiver of the Church. Thus the apostles acted. When they had first proved the truth of their doctrine by fair reason and argument, and their own commission by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that the faith of the Church should not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God, it was necessary that they who were to publish Christ's religion, should teach whatever he commanded them, and themselves command and exhort obedience to them.

These were the methods the apostles of Christ used in teaching his religion, and it accordingly met with success beyond human expectation. And though the prevalence of an opinion is no sure argument of truth, yet when principles contrary to men's inclinations and interests make their way only by evidence, and the force of reason and argument, against all methods of long and violent opposition, it is a very strong presumption of their truth, and that such success must be owing to the power of God attending it. And to suppose that such a religion as Christianity should prevail as it did, and by such means, without a miracle, would itself, in reality, be one of the greatest of miracles.

XI. From these arguments and evidences I cannot but be convinced that Jesus was a person sent from God, and that his apostles acted by his commission and authority, and that therefore the whole Christian religion, as contained in the New Testament, is a revelation from God.

As to the difficulties and objections that may be urged against its divine authority, I think they are far from carrying in them any evidence or proof. For as to those which are of greatest weight, they do not affect the truth of the facts recorded, nor destroy at all the credibility of them. There have never been any objections offered that render it unlikely or improbable, that Jesus Christ lived an holy life, taught excellent doctrines, did many great miracles, died on the cross, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and poured down his Spirit on his apostles. And, therefore, whilst these facts which support the credit of Christianity, stand upon this sure foundation of certainty, I must necessarily believe the divine authority of the Christian revelation, though the difficulties pretended were much greater than they are.

Some of them may arise either from not knowing some particular circumstances and customs referred to, from the shortness of the accounts which are delivered, or from some lesser errors that may have cast some obscurity on those accounts. But from whencesoever they arise, they cannot invalidate the proof which arises from real and well attested facts, nor make me doubt of things that stand upon the strongest foundation of evidence.

I find, indeed, that many things, which have appeared for a long while to wise and thoughtful men as difficulties of great weight, have at length been fully cleared up, and set in a very plain and rational view; and I therefore please myself with the hope, that in the course of Providence, those things which still remain dark and perplexed, may be explained and set in a just light, and made appear as easy and consistent as they are now obscure and intricate.

Besides, these difficulties which are pre-

tended, do not in the least affect the main and substantial parts of Christianity; they do not cast any obscurity over the precepts, and promises, and principles of the gospel, and of consequence do not affect my duty or my happiness. Notwithstanding all the objections that can be urged, I still find that the directions to serve God, and obey Christ, and secure my eternal salvation, are very obvious and plain, and therefore I am not under any pain or fear upon account of things I do not understand, or cannot explain.

But what is of more importance, is, that the principal objections that are urged against the divine authority of the Christian religion, are fairly to be answered, so as to give satisfaction to any impartial and unprejudiced mind. It hath been objected against the prophecies relating to Christ, that they are to be interpreted of him only in an allegorical and mystical sense, and that they are in their nature obscure, and do not so plainly point out the Messiah as might be expected and desired. Whereas the truth is, that though there may be a difficulty in interpreting some of them, yet there are others which are exceeding plain and clear, have an evident reference to Christ, do agree to the circumstances of no other person, are accomplished in him, and in him only. And if there are any prophecies, originally relating to other persons and things, applied to Christ, and the circumstances of his appearance and kingdom, they are never cited as originally belonging to Christ, but only as applicable to him in their proper meaning, and the times and events to which they are referred.

When it is objected against the miracles of Christ, that they were the effect of magic, this appears to be absolutely impossible; for it was never yet heard of, that magicians could raise the dead, and do the other wonderful works that Jesus did. Besides, the end of his miracles was so great and good, as a wicked impostor and magician can never be supposed to have in view; and till it can be shewn that the Christian religion is a wicked religion, I must believe that the miracles recorded in the New Testament were wrought by an holy and good person, under the immediate influence of God.

If it be objected, that some of the miracles recorded are attended with some very absurd and improbable circumstances, I think this charge hath not, and cannot be proved. And from the unsuccessful attempts that have been made this way, I have reason to believe that the more the miracles of Christ and his apostles are considered, they will appear more and more wonderful in themselves, and more worthy the interposition and assistance of God.

If it be objected, that there is no sufficient evidence or proof that these miracles were ever wrought, I apprehend this objection to be of little weight; because as there is the same ground of certainty for these, as there is for any other ancient facts which obtain universal belief, they deserve to be equally credited; and I think nothing can be more unreasonable and unfair than to allow the same evidence to be sufficient as to some facts, and to deny the sufficiency of it as to others, which are equally possible in themselves, consistent with all the perfections of God, and designed to answer the most valuable ends and purposes amongst men.

If it be said, that miracles are in their nature impossible, I think this can never be allowed but upon the supposition that all things are governed by, or rather subjected to an absolute and unalterable fatality. Because, if the supreme and eternal Cause of all things be possessed of liberty and power, the miracles recorded in the sacred writings are as possible to him as any other actions whatsoever, and according to my conception, much more easily performed than the work of creation, which is a much higher exertion of power, and is by all sober deists ascribed to the will and agency of God; and of consequence I can never allow the impossibility of miracles, because such a notion appears to me destructive of the being and perfections of God.

As to the doctrines of Christ, if it be urged that some of them are unintelligible and mysterious, I have this to satisfy myself, that it is not much wonder if they should be so, because many of them relate to God, whom "none by searching can find out to perfection;" and that this is no more than may be objected against many of the most certain truths of natural religion. For whoever will enter into the consideration of the immensity and eternity of God, attributes which certainly belong to him, will find himself lost in the infinite and boundless subject. As far as they are mysterious and incapable of being understood, I am sure that my acceptance with God doth not depend on my understanding them; and as far as they are intelligible, they increase my adoration, reverence, and love of God; awaken and excite me to the care and practice of godliness and virtue; and thus help me on in my preparation for heaven and happiness.

If it be objected, that any of the doctrines of Christianity are irrational and absurd, I apprehend this hath never been proved by any of the enemies of the Christian revelation. Many principles which they have endeavoured to expose to ridicule, have not been the doctrines of the gospel, but either their own mistakes, or the corrupt additions of weak and designing men to the simplicity of the truth of Christ. Other doctrines that have been excepted against, have not been

revealed in their full extent and compass, and, therefore, can never be proved absurd by any particular inferences drawn from them; because those very inferences may themselves appear false and absurd when the doctrines are placed in their full light, and men are rendered capable of clearly discerning and fully understanding them. As to others which have been excepted against, they have stood their ground both against ridicule and malice, and the objections that have been urged have had no other effect than to expose their own weakness, and to render the principles of the gospel of Christ more evident and convincing.

If it should be objected, that the very possibility of revelation itself may be questioned, I answer, that this must be upon one or other of these suppositions, — either that God himself, who hath established the order and course of nature, cannot vary from it; or else, that it is not to be conceived how he should discover himself to any person, so as that he shall be sure it is God and no other.

If the former be asserted, that God himself cannot alter and vary from the course of nature, which he himself hath fixed, it will follow that he was obliged, by some external necessity, to form all things as they are, or else by a fitness of things absolutely independent upon his own pleasure and will.

If the first be asserted, that God was obliged by some external necessity, or the agency of some being prior and superior to himself,— this is to assert eternity to be prior to itself, and infinite wisdom and power capable of being controlled by wisdom and power more than infinite, which is absurd.

If the latter be asserted, that God was obliged by a fitness of things independent upon his own pleasure and will, this will appear equally absurd; because, if he was under no external necessity to constitute the present frame, and consequently the present fitness of things, the actual constitution of the one and the other can be owing to no other cause or reason, but what is in God himself, and which, therefore, cannot be independent upon God; which cause or reason can be no other than the will of God, directed by the dictates of his own wisdom and goodness. And of consequence, the present frame of things, with the fitness that results from it, is owing to the good pleasure and free choice of God, directed by the perfections of his own mind; which perfections do not destroy any natural power of acting or not acting; but only direct to the wisest and best use of it. The very essence of liberty doth indeed consist in wisdom to direct and power to execute.

Hence it follows, that if the present frame of things be the result of the most perfect freedom and choice in God, the same free choice will and must take place, in every other circumstance to which perfect wisdom and goodness do direct. And, therefore, if it be agreeable to the dictates of such perfections in God, to vouchsafe an external revelation to mankind, in the case of an universal ignorance and degeneracy, such a revelation is as possible as the original constitution of things, and may be accounted for upon the very same foundation of reason.

But if it be said, that it cannot be conceived how God can so discover himself to any person, as that he shall be sure it is God and no other, I answer, that supposing we are not able to describe the method by which God makes himself known to men, it will by no means follow, that it is impossible for God to do so, unless our conceptions are the measure of all possibilities. If God be the universal Creator, he is surely the Creator of the souls of men, and hath implanted in them all their perceptive and reasonable powers and faculties; and of consequence, being the former of spirits, he must be capable of acting on them, which sufficiently proves the possibility of revelation.

Besides, if, as the whole visible creation around us shews the possibility and great probability of, there are reasonable spirits of natures, orders, and powers superior to us; I suppose they will not be thought to be incapable of converse, and of communicating their ideas to each other: for this would be to suppose spirits less happy than men: and if created spirits can thus convey their minds to each other, so as that they shall be absolutely sure who it is they converse with, can it be imagined that God the infinite Spirit should not be able to convey his will to spirits and reasonable beings, so as that they shall be sure that it is God who converses with them?

Nothing is more certain than that God, who is an absolute Spirit, acts on the material world; and yet we cannot tell the manner how God acts upon it: and it is very wonderful to consider how one nature, absolutely distinct, and of quite different attributes and properties from another, should thus continually act upon and influence it. But that spiritual beings, between whose natures, as spiritual, there is a necessary likeness and conformity, should act upon each other, and be capable of conversing with, and communicating their ideas to each other, is a much more easy and rational supposition, and as probable, as that body should act upon body, of which the whole frame of the material world is an absolute, constant proof.

The account which revelation itself gives of the manner in which God conveyed his mind to men, is, either by an audible voice, attended with an appearance of visible glory, or else by making certain very clear and

strong impressions on their minds. As to the former way, it is as reasonable to think that the voice and presence of God may be of so very peculiar a nature, as to be as well known, and as certainly distinguished, as the voice and countenance of a friend. And as to the latter, it appears to me extremely probable, that impressions made on the mind may be attended with such peculiar circumstances, which may as truly and certainly discover God, as a friend may be known by his resemblance and image, or as though we were mere spirits, and God was conversing with us as such.

If it be allowed that revelation is possible, it may be denied that it is necessary, because the natural reason of men's minds is abundantly sufficient to demonstrate to them whatever God requires of them. I very readily grant, that the reasonable powers and faculties of men's minds are very capable of leading them into the knowledge of some of the most important truths that we are concerned to know, and duties we are obliged to perform ; and that men are criminal in the sight of God, if they run into ignorance and vice, through a neglect to improve those excellent faculties of reason, which God hath given them.

But then it ought to be considered, that the powers of all men are not alike capable, and that though truths of importance when offered to them may be discerned and approved by them, yet that the generality would scarce ever have been able, by a long course of argument and inference, to have reasoned themselves into a clear knowledge of all those principles which are necessary to be known, effectually to support the interest of true religion, and the practice of virtue ; especially if we consider them as wholly taken up with the affairs of the present life, educated with strong prejudices in favour of superstition and error, and trained up from infancy in idolatrous practices, and criminal courses. In such circumstances, what reason may be capable of doing, I know not. But that it hath not in fact led men to the knowledge of all the necessary principles and truths of religion, is evident from the history of almost all nations, who have been destitute of revelation. And, therefore, to argue against the necessity of revelation, because possibly men's own reason might have been sufficient without it, when in reality they did need it, is to set up mere supposition against positive fact, and to reason from possibilities against experience and certainty.

Reason,—that is, men's reasonable powers, are unquestionably capable of great improvements, and of making very considerable discoveries, with proper assistance and cultivation. But without suitable helps and means of information, I apprehend that no man can affirm they would lead him into the knowledge of all the necessary principles of religion. Cicero, the greatest genius of the age in which he lived, did not owe his superior knowledge and wisdom to himself only. He had the writings of Rome and Greece to instruct and inform him. From these he understood the principles of the several sects of philosophers that were before him, the arguments with which they confirmed their respective sentiments, and the objections that were urged by some against the schemes and principles of others. Upon this foundation it was easy to reason, and in whatever respects his sentiments were nobler than others, they were not properly the mere discoveries of his own mind, but inferences from, or the improvements of the discoveries and principles of others. And I cannot help thinking, that if any men are now capable of forming to themselves a complete scheme of rational religion and morals, they owe it to the discoveries of the gospel revelation, though they assume the glory of it entirely to their reason.

Besides, though reason might possibly discover the duties of religion and virtue without any revelation, it cannot, in the nature of things, certainly discover what the rewards of being religious and virtuous shall be. Reason will indeed inform us, that a being perfectly virtuous, and who constantly acts agreeably to the reason and nature of things, without any deviation from it, cannot be finally miserable, but must be in some measure happy in the divine approbation and acceptance. But of what degree and duration that happiness shall be, depends wholly on the good pleasure of God. Being itself is the voluntary gift of the Supreme Cause, and of consequence, the continuance of being must depend on his will who first gave it. And though perfect virtue will always be entitled to a proportionable reward from God, yet that such a being, and the happiness consequent upon his virtue, shall and must be of an everlasting continuance, can never be proved from the reason and nature of things, and of consequence, the knowledge of it can be derived from nothing but the voluntary discoveries of God himself.

This I think is plain, upon the supposition of a being perfectly virtuous. But if any reasonable beings deviate from the law of their creation, and act contrary to that fitness of things which reason assures them ought to be the rule of their actions ; in such a case reason will be so far from giving any positive assurances of a reward, that it will rather lead men to the expectations and fears of punishment, there being as natural a connection between vice and punishment, as there is between virtue and a reward. Whether God will pardon, and upon what conditions ; whether repentance, and a sincere amendment for the

future, shall entitle to happiness, and especially the same happiness as would have been the reward of perfect virtue, here reason can never determine. And of consequence, if the certain knowledge of these important articles be in any sense necessary to encourage the repentance and reformation of men, it is in the same sense absolutely necessary they should have a revelation from God concerning them.

If it be said, that supposing a revelation actually given, such revelation can be nothing but a revival of the principles and duties of natural religion, because men's acceptance with God can depend on nothing but their acting agreeable to the law of their reason and nature. I answer, that if by the principles and duties of natural religion be meant such principles and duties which, when discovered, appear reasonable to the minds of men, it may be allowed, that revelation doth not, and cannot place the happiness and acceptance of men with God, upon any thing that is not reasonable and fit for them to know and do, and of which they cannot, in some measure, discern the reasonableness and fitness; for then one certain mark of the truth of revelation would be plainly wanting, which is its placing the happiness of men upon such a foundation as appears reasonable in itself, and, therefore, worthy of God; because I cannot believe that to be worthy of God which by reason I cannot in some measure plainly discern to be so.

But if by the principles and duties of natural religion, be meant such principles and duties which natural reason, without any divine revelation, will lead men to the certain knowledge of, then the assertion is evidently false, that revelation can contain nothing but the principles and duties of natural religion; because, as hath been observed, one great end of revelation is to give men certainty of such important principles as natural reason is never able to do.

If we consider men in circumstances of degeneracy, and as having acted contrary to the law of reason, a revelation merely to revive the law of nature would evidently be insufficient for their peace and happiness. For though this would be a direction of their future conduct, it would be no security to them against the punishment due to them for their past transgressions, which would prove the highest discouragement to their obedience for the time to come. And of consequence, a revelation from God, vouchsafed to mankind in such circumstances, must contain more than the mere law of nature, namely, the method and conditions of God's extending his forgiveness to his sinful creatures; without which it would want one essential mark of its being from God, namely, its suitableness to the wants and necessities of mankind.

Besides, if God hath given men a revelation of his will, attended with sufficient evidence and proof, the belief of such a revelation is a moral duty, and a necessary instance of respect and reverence due to God; it being as reasonable and fit that I should attend to the voice and will of the supreme being in external revelation, as that I should submit to the voice and will of God by reason or internal revelation.

Upon this foundation depends that command of Jesus Christ, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." It is possible in hypothesis, that men may govern their passions, and act well in society, who do not believe the being of a God. But yet to "believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him," is a principle of natural religion; and, as I imagine, necessary to every man's happiness in the divine acceptance. And by consequence, if it be the will of God that I should believe in Christ, and if there be evidence to convince me of the reasonableness of believing in him, it doth not seem more unreasonable that God should require me to believe in Christ, than it doth that he should require me to believe in himself, in order to my receiving a reward of grace and favour from him; because, if the sufficiency of evidence be a reason for God's requiring belief in any case, it is a reason that will hold good in every one without exception.

Besides, if the observance of the religion and law of nature be allowed to dispose and prepare men for happiness in the favour of God, and though revelation cannot set aside the obligations of the one or other, but is principally designed to recover men to the knowledge of, and a conformity to the original fitness of things; yet I apprehend that revelation may enforce the practice of them by such considerations, and motives, and special precepts, as have no certain foundation in natural reason and light, — that is, which men's reason would never have led them to have thought of, without a divine direction and command.

If the religion of nature be of God's constitution and appointment, and results from those relations which he himself hath been pleased to order and fix, I apprehend that such positive institutions, which have a direct tendency to establish and promote men's regard to and observance of it, may be ordained of God, and thereby become obligatory upon men. Because, if the law of nature itself necessarily and universally obliges mankind, and their happiness depends on the observation of it; such institutions which render the observation of it more easy and practicable, however voluntary and positive in themselves, are consistent with all our notions of the divine perfections, and ought

to be so far from being objections against the truth of any religion that contains them, that they are rather arguments in favour of it, as they are evident proofs of the wise and tender concern of God for the perfection and happiness of his creatures.

If, then, the peculiars of the Christian religion have all of them this tendency, as I apprehend they have, it follows, that God's requiring us to observe them is a reasonable and fit command; as it is a command resulting from his unerring wisdom, and his gracious regard to our welfare and interest. And, therefore, in this respect internal and external revelation, or the religion of nature and revelation, may certainly differ, and the latter command what the former would never discover or oblige to.

If it be objected against the Christian revelation, that it is not explicit and clear; but that those who search it fall into very different sentiments and opinions as to several articles of importance, and that it is scarce to be supposed that God should be the author of a revelation which, when given, is incapable of being understood; I have this that gives my mind satisfaction and ease,—that if there are any intimations of doctrines in Scripture, that sincere persons who do the will of God, and lay aside all prejudice, and desire to receive the truths of God as far as they can understand them, cannot, after all their endeavour and care, come to the certain knowledge of, the knowledge of such doctrines cannot be necessary to their acceptance and salvation; because Christ Jesus expressly declares, that "if any man doth the will of his Father, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or no."

As to those doctrines, upon the acknowledgment of which the New Testament writings do expressly make salvation to depend, I find, to my very great comfort, that they are very plain and intelligible in themselves, such as the existence of one God, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and there being one Mediator between God and man, through whom God dispenses all blessings to his creatures. These, and other truths of like importance, are set in the clearest light; and if any have obscured and perplexed them by intricate distinctions and philosophical speculations, the gospel of Christ gives no sanction to them, and the plain Christian hath no concern and business with them.

If it be said, that the Christian religion hath no better effect upon mankind than the light of nature had, and that therefore it can scarcely be imagined that God would be the author of so ineffectual an institution; I answer, that I suppose it can never be made appear that mankind are now as universally in the same circumstances of ignorance and vice, as they were before the revelation of the gospel.

The knowledge of one God, the universal Creator and Father, doth certainly more universally obtain than it did in the times of deep Paganism and Idolatry; the precepts of religion and virtue are more generally understood; and the rewards and punishments of a future life more certain as to their evidence, and more extensive as to the acknowledgment of them.

And though many who profess to believe these things act contrary to their own principles, yet there have been many in every age, and now are, who, under the influence of this faith, "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world."

And as to those who do not, it is not owing to the insufficiency of the principles and motives of Christianity, but to the want of consideration and a serious regard to them, and those powerful habits which they have contracted, and continue to strengthen by a wilful and allowed indulgence.

And therefore, if the gospel be objected against as insufficient to reform men, and engage them to the love and practice of religion and virtue, it must be because it doth not necessitate and compel them, and lay an irresistible force on the mind to comply with it. Whereas, if this were the case, it would be an unanswerable objection against it, because this would destroy that freedom and choice of the mind, which is essentially necessary to give virtue itself its proper value, and render it capable of a reward from God. And of consequence, if the Christian religion contains every argument and motive that is proper to be laid before and influence reasonable and free creatures, its not always proving effectual is no argument of its insufficiency, nor the least shadow of proof that it is not worthy of, and actually from God.

And lastly, if it be objected that it hath been the occasion of such confusions, disorders, mischiefs, and calamities in the world, as that it can never be imagined that God would be the author of an institution that should be attended with such fatal consequences: I answer, that *genuine* Christianity hath never been the cause of any of the distractions and miseries that have afflicted mankind, since its entrance into the world, though that which hath been substituted in the room of Christianity too often hath. Nothing is more visible and plain, than that the Christian religion is designed to calm the passions and cure the vices of mankind. And if its principles were but duly attended to, and its precepts heartily submitted to, Christians would maintain the most excellent dispositions, and lead the most inoffensive and blameless lives; and this world would be, what I please myself the next world shall be, an habitation of

righteousness, peace, and joy. The perfection of the Christian law, as to all its moral precepts and important motives, abundantly justifies the wisdom and goodness of God in giving it; and he is no more answerable for men's corrupting and abusing it, and refusing to act agreeable to it, than he is for their abusing the blessings of his common providence.

Upon a full view, therefore, of these and other objections, I think they are capable of a satisfactory answer; and as the evidence for the truth and certainty of the Christian religion stands in full force, I think myself bound to receive it as a revelation from God, and to regulate my faith, and hope, and practice by it.

XII. And that I might not be chargeable with partiality in my regards and attachment to Christianity, I have not only carefully examined the credentials it brings to prove its divine original, but I have also endeavoured honestly to compare it with other religions that are in the world, as far as I am capable of understanding and judging concerning them; and this comparison confirms me in the belief of the Christian religion, and increases my esteem and value for it.

Paganism carries in it innumerable marks of its impiety and falsehood. The number of gods it hath introduced, the superstitions it countenances, the impure and barbarous rites it warrants and prescribes, are demonstrative proofs it hath no foundation in the reason and nature of things, and cannot be the appointment of, or agreeable to, the will of God, the supreme unchangeable purity, wisdom, and goodness.

As to Mahometanism, though it pretends to the character of a revelation from God, yet it hath all the evident marks of a real imposture. The character of its author appears too suspected ever to support the honour of his being a messenger from God. His disclaiming miracles to attest the truth of his mission, is a plain acknowledgment of the weakness and falsehood of his pretences. The few wonderful things related of him appear at first view to be fable and romance. His forbidding inquiries into the nature and principles of his religion, evidently shews he was conscious to himself that it would not bear them. His propagating it by the sword, is proof sufficient that he knew it would not prevail with the weapons of reason and argument. The falsehoods it contains as to matters of fact, demonstrate the ignorance or wickedness of its founder. The indulgences it gives to the appetites and sensual desires of men, is a strong argument of the badness of his own inclinations, and shews his resolution to sacrifice chastity and virtue to the more prevalent views of ambition and power. Many of his precepts are absurd and ridiculous, and unworthy the nature of true religion. And lastly, the motives and rewards set before men, and promised by him to encourage them to embrace and continue in his religion, are suited only to such whose minds are oppressed with sensuality and enslaved to vice; no way worthy of the known perfections of God, nor any way suited to the rational spiritual nature of man. And of consequence, a religion thus defective in its evidence, and false in its very constitution and frame, can never be the institution of God, nor worthy of my reception and belief.

As to the Jewish religion, though this appears to have many genuine marks of its being the appointment of God, yet I find that it could not in its nature be intended for the religion of the world, because several of its precepts were such, as that by far the greatest part of the world could not possibly comply with them. It was an institution peculiar to one particular nation and country, and of consequence, as such, never did or could oblige the rest of mankind. And as it was calculated for one peculiar people, so it appears to have been constituted for a time only; the books themselves, which contain the accounts of it, intimating that the "sceptre should depart from Judah;" that "another prophet should be raised up like to Moses;" and declaring that "the days should come when God would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that he made with their fathers, when he took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt." Besides this, there appear to be various prophecies relating to a more excellent and durable state of things, to commence under the government and reign of a particular person, foretold in different ages, described by various persons, as to the time of his coming, the place of his birth, the nature of his works, his sufferings and death, his resurrection and kingdom, and other remarkable events that attended him. And as these predictions and circumstances do all centre in Jesus Christ, I plainly discern that Judaism is so far from demanding my submission to it, that it directs me to Jesus Christ, and is accomplished and perfected in him.

Upon all these accounts, I declare myself to be a Christian; and am conscious that I have not taken up the profession of Christianity by chance, or in compliance with the custom of my country, or merely through the force of education. But as my faith is the result of a serious examination and impartial inquiry, and as I am persuaded that its pretences to revelation and a divine original are supported with all the strength of argument and proof that the nature of the thing will bear, or a reasonable mind can desire, I think

it both my duty and interest to submit to it as an institution from God. And till I can see the evidence of it disproved, or the religion of Christ itself demonstrated to be irrational and absurd, I am determined by the grace of God to hold fast my profession to the end, seeking after the kingdom of everlasting glory by the practice of that righteousness which prepares for and leads to it; in a firm dependence upon the truth of that comfortable declaration of Jesus Christ, "That God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

THE END.

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3

THE

TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY

DEMONSTRATED,

IN

A DIALOGUE BETWIXT A CHRISTIAN AND A DEIST;

WHEREIN THE CASE OF THE JEWS IS LIKEWISE CONSIDERED.

BY THE LATE

REV. CHARLES LESLIE, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "A SHORT AND EASY METHOD WITH THE DEISTS."

EDINBURGH:
Printed by ANDREW SHORTREDE, Thistle Lane.

THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY DEMONSTRATED.

(1.) *Christian.* It is strange you should stand it out so against your own happiness, and employ your whole wit and skill, to work in yourself a disbelief of any future rewards or punishments, only that you may live easy (as you think) in this world, and enjoy your pleasures: which yet you cannot enjoy free and undisturbed from the fear of those things that are to come, the event of which you pretend not to be sure of; and therefore are sure of a life full of trouble, that admits not of any consolation, and of a miserable and wretched death, according to the utmost that you yourself propose.

Deist. How can you say that, when I propose to live without any fear of those things? I fear not hell, and I have discarded the expectation of heaven, because I believe neither.

Chr. Are you sure there are no such things?

De. That is a negative, and I pretend not to prove it.

Chr. Then you must remain in a doubt of it. And what a condition it is to die in this doubt, when the issue is eternal misery! And this is the utmost, by your own confession, that you can propose to yourself. Therefore I called yours a disbelief, rather than a belief of any thing. It is we Christians who believe, you Deists only disbelieve.

And if the event should prove as you would have it, and that we should all be annihilated at our death, we should be in as good a condition as you. But, on the other side, if the event should prove as we expect it, then you are eternally miserable, and we eternally happy. Therefore one would think it the wisest part to take our side of the question; especially considering that those poor pleasures, for the sake of which you determine yourselves against us, are but mere amusements, and no real enjoyments. Nay, we had better be without them than have them, even as to this life itself. Is not temperance and a healthful constitution more pleasant than those pains and aches, sick head and stomach, that are inseparable companions of debauchery and excess, besides the clouding our reason, and turning sottish in our understanding?

De. We take pleasure in them for the time, and mind not the consequences. But, however, a man cannot believe as he pleases. And therefore, notwithstanding all the glorious and terrible things which you speak of, it makes nothing to me, unless you can evidently prove them to be so. And you must still leave me to judge for myself, after you have done all you can.

Chr. What I have said, is only to dispose you to hear me impartially, and not to be prejudiced against your own happiness, both here and hereafter.

(2.) *De.* Well, without more prefacing, the case is this: I believe a God, as well as you; but for revelation, and what you call the Holy Scriptures, I may think they were wrote by pious and good men, who might take this method of speaking, as from God, and in his name, as supposing that those good thoughts came from him, and that it would have a greater effect upon the people; and might couch their morals under histories of things supposed to be done, as several of the wise heathens have taken this course, in what they told of Jupiter and Juno, and the rest of their gods and goddesses. But as to the facts themselves, I believe the one no more than the other; or that all the facts in Ovid's Metamorphoses, or in Æsop's Fables, were true.

Chr. You seem willing, by this, to preserve a respectful esteem and value for the Holy Scriptures, as being wrote by pious and good men, and with a good design, to reform the manners of men.

But your argument proves directly against the purpose for which you brought it, and makes the penmen of the Scriptures to be far from good men, to be not only cheats and impostors, but blasphemers, and an abomination before God. For such the same Scriptures frequently call those who presume to speak as from God, and in his name, when he had not sent them, and given them authority so to do. And the law in the Scriptures condemns such to be stoned to death as blasphemers.

It was not so with the heathens, their moralists did not use the style of "Thus saith

the Lord ;" and their philosophers opposed and wrote against one another without any offence. For all the matter was which of them could reason best ; they pretended to no more.

And for the facts of the fables of their gods, themselves did not believe them, and have wrote the mythology or moral that was intended by them.

De. But many of the common people did believe the facts themselves. As it is with the common people now in the church of Rome, who believe the most senseless and ridiculous stories in their books of legends to be as true as the Gospel ; though the more wise among them call them only pious frauds, to increase the devotion of the people. And so we think of your Gospel itself, and all the other books you say were wrote by men divinely inspired. We will let you keep them to cajole the mob, but when you would impose them upon men of sense, we must come to the test with you.

Chr. That is what I desire ; and to see whether there are no more evidences to be given for the truth of Christianity—that is, of the Holy Scriptures—than are given for the legends, and all the fabulous stories of the heathen gods. And if so, I will give up my argument, and confess that it is not in my power to convince you.

De. I cannot refuse to join issue with you upon this. To begin, then, I desire to know your evidences for the truth of your Scriptures, and the facts therein related.

(3.) *Chr.* If the truth of the book, and the facts therein related, be proved, I suppose you will not deny the doctrines to be true.

De. No ; for if I saw such miracles with my eyes as are said to have been done by Moses and Christ, I could not think of any greater proof to be given, that such an one was sent of God. Therefore, if your Bible be true as to the facts, I must believe it in the doctrine too. But there are other books which pretend to give us revelations from God, and we must know which of these is true.

Chr. To distinguish this book from all others which pretend to give revelations from God, these four marks or rules were set down.

I. That the facts related be such of which men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may judge.—(This cuts off enthusiastical pretences to revelation, and opinions which may be propagated in the dark, and, like the tares, not known till they are grown up, and the first beginning of them not discovered.)

II. That these facts be done openly in the face of the world.

III. That not only public monuments, but outward institutions and actions, should be appointed, and perpetually kept up in memory of them.

IV. That these institutions to be observed should commence from the time that the facts were done ; and consequently that the book wherein these facts and institutions are recorded, should be written at the time, and by those who did the facts, or by eye and ear-witnesses. For that is included in this mark, and is the main part of it ; to prevent false stories being coined in after ages of things done many hundred years before, which none alive can disprove. Thus Moses wrote his five books containing his actions and institutions ; and those of Christ were wrote by his disciples, who were eye and ear-witnesses of what they related. And particular care was taken of this, as you may see, Acts, i. 21, 22, upon choosing one to supply the place of Judas. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until that same day that he was taken from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." And Saint John begins his first epistle thus : "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled—that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

I have explained this fourth mark, because the author of the Detection, either wilfully or ignorantly, seems not to understand it. And this alone overthrows all the stories he has told, which he would make parallel to the facts of Moses and of Christ ; and therefore alleges that they have all these four marks. But he must begin again, and own that these four marks still stand an irrefragable proof of the truth of any fact which has them all, till he can produce a book which was wrote by the actors or eye-witnesses of the facts it relates, and show that such facts, having the other three marks, have been detected to be false. Which, when he can do, I will give him up these four marks as an insufficient proof, and own I was mistaken in them. But hitherto they have stood the test ; for he himself will not say he has produced any such book in all his Detection.

If he says that facts may be true, though no such book can be produced for them, and though they have not all the aforesaid marks, I will easily grant it. But all I contend for is, that whatever has all these four marks cannot be false. For example : could Moses have persuaded six hundred thousand men that he had led them through the sea in the manner related in Exodus, if it had not been true ? if he could, it would have been a greater miracle than the other. The like of their being fed forty years in the wilderness without bread, by manna rained down to them from heaven ; the like of Christ's feeding five thousand at a time with five loaves ; and so of all the rest. The two first

marks secure from any cheat or imposture at the time the facts were done, and the two last marks secure equally from any imposition in after ages, because this book which relates these facts speaks of itself as written at that time by the actors or eye-witnesses, and as commanded by God to be carefully kept and preserved to all generations, and read publicly to all the people at stated times, as is commanded, (Deut. xxxi. 10—12 ;) and was practised, (Josh. viii. 34, 35 ; Neh. viii. &c.) And the institutions appointed in this book were to be perpetually observed from the day of the institution for ever among these people, in memory of the facts, as the passover, (Exod. xii.) and so of the rest. Now, suppose this book to have been forged a thousand years after Moses, would not every one say, when it first appeared, We never heard of this book before, we know of no such institutions, as of a passover, or circumcision, or sabbaths, and the many feasts and fasts therein appointed ; of a tribe of Levi, and a tabernacle wherein they were to serve in such an order of priesthood, &c. : therefore this book must be an errant forgery, for it wants all those marks it gives of itself, as to its own continuance, and of those institutions it relates. No instance can be shown since the world began of any book so circumstantiated, that was a forgery, and passed as truth upon any people. I think it impossible ; and therefore that the four marks are still an invincible proof of the truth of that book, and those facts wherein all these marks do meet.

But since I am come upon this subject again, I will endeavour to improve it, and give four other marks, some of which no fact, however true, ever had, or can have, but the fact of Christ alone. Thus, while I support the fact of Moses, I set that of Christ above him, as the Lord is above the servant. And the Jews being herein principally concerned, I will consider their case likewise as we go along : therefore I add this fifth mark as peculiar to our Bible, and to distinguish it from all other histories which relate facts formerly done.

(V.) That the book which relates the facts contains likewise the law of that people to whom it belongs, and be their statute-book by which their causes are determined. This will make it impossible for any to coin or forge such a book, so as to make it pass upon any people. For example : If I should forge a statute-book for England, and publish it next term, could I make all the judges, lawyers, and people, believe that this was their true and only statute-book by which their causes had been determined these many hundred years past ? They must forget their old statute-book, and believe that this new book, which they never saw or heard of before, was that same old book which has been pleaded in Westminster-Hall for so many ages, which has been so often printed, and the originals of which are now kept in the Tower, to be consulted as there is occasion.

De. I grant that to be impossible. But how do you apply it ?

Chr. It is evident as to the books of Moses, which are not only a history of the Jews, but their very statute-book, wherein their municipal law, as well civil as ecclesiastical, was contained.

De. This is so indeed as to the books of Moses, to which they always appealed : " To the law and to the testimony." And they had no other statute-book. But this will not agree to your Gospel, which is no municipal law, nor any civil law at all, and no civil causes were tried by it.

Chr. The Law was given to the Jews, as a distinct and separate people from all other nations upon the earth ; and therefore was a municipal law particularly for that nation only of the Jews. But Christianity was to extend to all the nations of the earth ; and Christians were to be gathered out of all nations ; and therefore the Gospel could not be a municipal law as to civil rights to all nations, who had each their own municipal laws. This could not be, without destroying all the municipal laws in the world, of every nation whatsoever ; and then none could be a Christian, without at the same time becoming a rebel to the government where he lived. This would have been for Christ to have immediately set up for universal and temporal king of all the world, as the Jews expected of their Messiah, and therefore would have made Christ a king. But he instructed them in the spiritual nature of his kingdom, that it was not " of this world," nor did respect their temporal or civil matters ; which therefore he left in the same state he found them, and commanded their obedience to their civil governors, though heathen, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. And as to the Law of Moses, he left the Jews still under it, as to their civil concerns, so far as the Romans, under whose subjection they then were, would permit them. As Pilate said to them, " Ye have a law ;" and " judge ye him according to your law."

But the Gospel was given as the spiritual and ecclesiastical law to the Church, whithersoever dispersed through all nations ; for that did not interfere with their temporal laws, as to civil government. And in this the fifth mark is made stronger to the Gospel than even to the Law ; for it is easier to suppose that any forgery might creep into the municipal law of a particular nation, than that all the nations whither Christianity is spread should conspire in the corruption of the Gospel, which to all Christians is of infinitely

greater concern than their temporal laws. And without such a concert of all Christian nations and people supposed, no such forgery could pass undiscovered in the Gospel, which is spread as far as Christianity, and read daily in their public offices.

De. But I say it is discovered, as appears by the multitude of your various lections.

Chr. That cannot be called a forgery; it is nothing but such mistakes as may very easily happen, and are almost unavoidable, in so many copies as have been made of the Gospel, before printing was known. And considering the many translations of it into several languages, where the idioms are different, and phrases may be mistaken, together with the natural slips of amanuenses, it is much more wonderful that there are no more various lections, than that there are so many.

But in this appears the great providence of God in the care the Christians took of this, that they have marked every the least various lection, even syllabical: and that among all these there is not found one which makes any alteration either in the facts or in the doctrines. So that instead of an objection, this becomes a strong confirmation of the truth and certainty of the Gospel, which stands thus perfectly clear of so much as any doubt concerning the facts or the doctrines therein related.

But I will now proceed to a stronger evidence than even this, and all that has been said before; which I have made the sixth mark, and that is the topic of prophecy.

(VI.) The great fact of Christ's coming into the world was prophesied of in the Old Testament from the beginning to the end, as it is said, (Luke, i. 70,) "By all the holy prophets which have been since the world began."

This evidence no other fact ever had; for there was no prophecy of Moses, but Moses himself did prophesy of Christ, (Deut. xviii. 15, applied Acts, iii. 22—24,) and sets down the several promises given of him. The first was to Adam, immediately after the fall, (Gen. iii. 15,) where he is called the seed of the woman, but not of the man, because he was to have no man for his father, though he had a woman to his mother. And of none other can this be said, nor that he should "bruise the serpent's head," that is, overcome the devil and all his power.

He was again promised to Abraham, as you may see, (Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18. See this applied, Gal. iii. 16.)

Jacob did expressly prophesy of him, with a mark of the time when he should come, and calls him "Shiloh," or "He that was to be sent," (Gen. xlix. 10.)

Balaam prophesied of him by the name of the Star of Jacob, and Sceptre of Israel, (Num. xxiv. 17.)

Daniel calls him the Messiah, the Prince; and tells the time of his coming and of his death, (Dan. ix. 25, 26.)

It was foretold that he should be born of a virgin, (Isa. vii. 14;) in the city of Bethlehem, (Micah, v. 2;) of the seed of Jesse, (Isa. xi. 1—10.) His low estate and sufferings are particularly described, (Psal. xxii. and Isa. liii.;) and his resurrection, (Psal. xvi. 10;) that he should sit upon the throne of David for ever, and be called "Wonderful," the "mighty God," the "Prince of Peace," (Isa. ix. 6, 7,) "The Lord our righteousness," (Jer. xxxiii. 16,) Jehovah Tsidkenu, (an incommunicable name given to none but the great God alone,) and Immanuel, that is, "God with us," (Isa. vii. 14;) and David, whose son he was according to the flesh, called him his Lord, (Psal. cx. 1.)

The cause of his sufferings is said to be for the sins of the people, and not for himself, (Isa. liii. 4—6; Dan. ix. 26.)

And as to the time of his coming, it is expressly said, (to the confusion of the Jews now,) that it was to be before the sceptre should depart from Judah, (Gen. xlix. 10;) in the second temple, (Hag. ii. 7—9,) within seventy weeks of the building of it, (Dan. ix. 24,) that is, (according to the prophetical known style of a day for a year,) within four hundred and ninety years after.

(1.) From these, and many more prophecies of the Messiah or Christ, his coming was the general expectation of the Jews from the beginning, but more especially about the time in which it was foretold he should come, when several false Messiahs did appear among them. And this expectation still remains with them, though they confess that the time foretold by all the prophets for his coming is past.

But what I have next to offer will be more strange to you. You may say it was natural for the Jews to expect their Messiah, who was prophesied of in their book of the Law, and was to be a Jew, and king of all the earth. But what had the Gentiles to do with this? There were no prophecies to them.

Therefore, what I have to show you is, that these prophecies of the Messiah were likewise to the Gentiles: for it is said he should be the expectation of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; and, (Gen. xlix. 10,) that the gathering of the people (or nations) should be to him. In the Vulgate it is rendered *expectatio gentium*, "the expectation of the Gentiles." He is called "the desire of all nations," (Hag. ii. 7.) And I will show you the general expectation the Gentiles had of his coming, about the time that he did come.

They knew him by the name of the East. Their tradition was, that the East should prevail, *ut valesceret oriens*, as I will show you presently. But first let me tell you, that

the Holy Scripture often alludes to him under this denomination. The blood of the great expiatory sacrifice was to be sprinkled towards the east, (Lev. xvi. 14,) to show whence the true expiatory sacrifice should come. And he is thus frequently styled in the Prophets, (Zech. iii. 8:) it is said, according to the Vulgate, "I will bring forth my servant the East;" and, (vi. 12,) "Behold the man whose name is the East." Our English renders it in both places the Branch, for the Hebrew word bears both senses. But the Greek renders it Ἀνατολὴ, which we translate the "day-spring," (Luke, i. 78,) and put on the margin Sun-rising or Branch. The Vulgate has it *oriens ex alto*, the East or Sun-rising from on high. He is called the "Sun of righteousness," (Mal. iv. 2;) and it is said, (Isa. lx. 3,) "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

(2.) Now, Sir, how literally was this fulfilled in the Magi (generally supposed to be kings) coming from the East, led by a star which appeared to them in the East, to worship Christ when he was born, and to bring presents unto him as unto a king, as it is told in the second of Saint Matthew!

De. Why do you quote Saint Matthew to me? You know we make no more of him than of one of your legend-writers, and believe this story no more than that these three kings are now buried at Cologne.

(3.) *Chr.* You make great use of the legends, and answer every thing by them; and I confess they are the greatest affront to Christianity, and, if possible, a disproof of it, as it must be to those who will place them upon the same foot with the Holy Bible, as too many do in the Church of Rome, and cry, we have the authority of the Church for both. And they are taught to receive the Holy Scriptures upon the authority of the Church only. But my business is not with them now; I shall only say, that when they can bring such evidences for the truth of their legends, or for any particular fact in them, as I do for the Holy Scriptures, and in particular, for the fact of Christ, then I will believe them.

De. Will you believe nothing that has not all these evidences you produce?

(4.) *Chr.* Far from it; for then I must believe nothing but this single fact of Christ: because no other fact in the world, no, not of all those recorded in Holy Scriptures, has all these evidences which the fact of Christ has. And so God has thought fitting, that this great fact, above all other facts of the greatest glory to God and importance to mankind, should appear with greater and more undeniable evidence than any other fact ever was in the world.

De. We are now upon the particular fact of the Magi or wise men coming to Christ. Have you any more to say as to that?

(5.) *Chr.* It has those same evidences that the truth of the Bible in general has, which are more than can be produced for any other book in the world. But now as to this fact in particular, Saint Matthew was the first who wrote the Gospel, and it was in the same age when this fact was said to be done. And can you think it possible that such a fact as this could have passed without contradiction, and a public exposing of Christianity, then so desirable and so much endeavoured by the unbelieving Jews, their high-priests, elders, &c. as the only means for their own preservation, if the fact had not been notorious and fresh in the memory of all the people then at Jerusalem, namely, that these wise men came thither, and that Herod and the whole city were troubled at the news they brought of the birth of the King of the Jews; that Herod thereupon gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, that they might search out of the prophets, and know the place where Christ should be born; and then the slaughter of the infants in and about Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, which followed—I say could such a fact as this have passed at that very time, if it had not been true? Could Saint Matthew have hoped to have palmed this upon all the people, and upon those very same chief priests and scribes who he said were so far concerned in it? Would none of them have contradicted it, if it had been a forgery? Especially when the detecting it would have strangled Christianity in its birth? Would not they have done it who suborned false witnesses against Christ, and gave large money to the soldiers to conceal (if possible) his resurrection? Would not they have done it, who persecuted Christianity with all spite and fury, and invented all imaginable false stories and calumnies against it? Whereas here was one at hand, this of the Magi, which, if false, could have been so easily detected, by appealing to every man, woman, and child, I may say, in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and even in all Judea; who no doubt had heard of the terrible massacre of so many infants, and the cause of it.

De. I can give no account why the writers against Christianity did not offer to contradict this fact of the star and the Magi, which is put in the very front of this Gospel of Saint Matthew. And there it is called his (Christ's) star. "We have seen his star in the East." As if God had created a new and extraordinary star on purpose, as the signal of Christ hung out in the heavens, to give the world notice of his birth. But did none of the heathen philosophers take notice of this star, or of this relation given of it by your Saint Matthew?

(6.) *Chr.* Yes. For Chalcidius in his com-

ment upon Plato's Timæus, speaking of the presages of stars mentioned by Plato, adds as a farther proof, *Est quoque alia venerabilior et sanctior historia.* There is likewise another more venerable and holy history, (by which I doubt not he means this of Saint Matthew, for what he tells seems to be taken out of it,) "That by the rising of a certain unusual star, not plagues and diseases, but the descent of the venerable God, for the salvation and benefit of mortals, was observed by the Chaldeans, who worshipped this God newly born, by offering gifts unto him."

De. This makes those Magi or wise men to have been Chaldeans, who I know were the most noted then in the world for the most curious learning, particularly in astronomy. And they were likewise East of Jerusalem, so that it might be well said they came from the East, and had seen his star in the East. But I cannot imagine how they should read the birth of a God in the face of a new star; and how that star should send them particularly to Jerusalem, though I may suppose it pointed them westward.

(7.) *Chr.* This will be easier to you, when you know, that all over the East there was a tradition, or fixed opinion, that about that time a King of the Jews would be born, who should rule the whole earth. And the appearance of this extraordinary star in the East was taken by them as a sign that he was then born. And whither should they go to look for the King of the Jews, but to Jerusalem? And when they came thither they inquired, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." This made Herod gather the priests and scribes together. And they, by searching the prophets, found that Bethlehem was the place; whereupon the wise men went to Bethlehem; and to convince them that they were right, the star which they had seen in the East appeared to them again, and "went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was." This made them "rejoice with such an exceeding great joy."

De. This would go down in some measure with me, if you could make good your first *postulatum*, of such a current tradition or opinion in the East; but for this you have given no sort of proof. And all the rest which you have inferred from thence must come to the ground with it, if it be not supported. I confess it would seem as strange to me as the star to the wise men, if God had (we know not how, it is unaccountable to us) sent such a notion into the minds of men, and at that time only, of such a King to be born, and that he should be a Jew, (the then most contemptible people in the world, subdued and conquered by the Romans,) and that he was to be King of the Jews, and thence to become King of all the earth, and conquer his conquerors. The Romans would have looked with disdain upon such a notion or prophecy as this; it would have made some stir among them, if they had heard of it, or given any credit to it.

(8.) *Chr.* You argue right; and I will show you what stir it made among them, and I hope you will take their word, as well for this eastern tradition, as for the effects it had among themselves. Nay, they wanted not the same tradition among themselves, and express prophecies of it in their Sibyls, and otherwise. So that the same expectation of the Messiah was then current over all the earth, with the Gentiles as well as with the Jews.

Tacitus in his History, l. v. c. 13, speaking of the great prodigies that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, says that many understood these as the forerunners of that extraordinary person whom the ancient books of the priests did foretell should come about that time from Judea, and obtain the universal dominion. His words are, "Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur:" that is, "Many were persuaded that it was contained in the old writings of the priests, that at that very time the east should prevail, and the Jews should have the dominion." And Suetonius in the Life of Vespasian, c. 1. n. 4. says, "Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in satis, ut eo tempore, Judæa profecti rerum potirentur;" that is, "That it was an ancient and constant opinion (or tradition) throughout the whole East, that at that time, those who came from Judea should obtain the dominion;" that is, some Jew should be universal king. Therefore Cicero, who was a commonwealths-man, in his second book of Divination, speaking of the books of the Sibyls, who likewise foretold this great King to come, says, "Cum antistibus agamus, et quidvis potius ex illis libris, quam regem proferant: quem Romæ post hæc nec Dii, nec homines esse patientur;" that is, "Let us deal with these priests, and let them bring any thing out of their books, rather than a king, whom neither the Gods nor men will suffer after this at Rome."

But he was mistaken, and had his head cut off for writing against kingly government. And others more considerable than he laid greater stress upon these prophecies, even the whole Senate of Rome, as I come to show you.

Whether these Sibyls gathered their prophecies out of the Old Testament, is needless here to examine. I am now only upon that general expectation which was then in the world of this great and universal King to come about that time.

(9.) The same year that Pompey took Jerusalem, one of these oracles of the Sibyls

made a great noise, which was, "That nature was about to bring forth a king to the Romans." Which, as Suetonius relates in the Life of Augustus, c. 94, did so terrify the Senate, that they made a decree to expose, that is, destroy, all the children born that year. "Senatum ex territum censuisse, ne quis illo anno genitus educaretur." That none born that year should be brought up, but exposed, that is, left in some wood or desert place to perish. But he tells how this dreadful sentence was prevented: "Eos qui gravidas uxores haberent, quod ad se quisque spem traheret, curasse ne Senatus consultum ad ærarium deferretur." That those senators whose wives were with child, because each was in hopes of having this great king, took care that the decree of the Senate should not be put into the ærarium or treasury, without which, by their constitution, the decree could not be put in execution. And Appian, Plutarch, Sallust, and Cicero, do all say, that it was this prophecy of the Sibyls which raised the ambition of Cornelius Lentulus at that time, hoping that he should be this King of the Romans. Virgil, a few years before the birth of Christ, in his fourth Eclogue, quotes a prophecy of one of these Sibyls speaking of an extraordinary person to be born about that time, who should introduce a golden age into the world, and restore all things, and should blot out our sins.

——Si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri.

And calls him,

Chara Deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.
Dear offspring of the Gods, and great son of Jove.

He describes a new state of things like the "new heavens" and "new earth," (Isaiah, lxv. 17.

Magnus ab integro seclorum nascitur ordo.
A great order of ages does begin, wholly new.

And as Isaiah describes the happy state in the "new earth," that the lion and the lamb should feed together, the serpent eat dust, and that they should not hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain," (Isai. lxv. 25.) Virgil does almost repeat his words:

—— Nec magnos metuent armenta leones.
Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
Occidet. ——

And as God introduces the Messiah with saying, "I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea," Hag. ii. 7. Virgil does in a manner translate it in this Eclogue, introducing the great person then to be born, and the joy which should be in the whole creation.

Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,
Terrasq. tractusq. maris, cœlumq. profundum.
Aspice venturo lætentur ut omnia sœclo.

Lo! teeming nature, bending with its load,
The earth, the ocean, and the heavens high,
Behold how all rejoice to greet the coming age.

Here the poet describes nature as in labour to bring forth this great King, as the other prophecy of the Sibyls before-mentioned speaks. And he says, "aderit jam tempus," — that the time was then at hand.

Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.
Now a new progeny from heaven descends.

And he applies it to Saloninus the son of Pollio the consul, then newly born, as if it was to be fulfilled in him. But as there was nothing like it in the event, so these words are too great to be applied to any mortal, or the reign of any king that ever was in the world; or to any other but to the Messiah the Lord of heaven and earth.

(10.) *De.* But, you know, the authority of these Sibyls is disputed. Some say the Christians did interpolate them, and added to them, in about a hundred years after Christ.

Chr. It is true, the Christians did often quote them against the heathens, as Saint Paul quoted the heathen poets to the Athenians, Acts, xvii. 28. And Clem. Alexandrinus in his Strom. l. 6. says, that Saint Paul quoted the Sibyls likewise in his disputations with the Gentiles. And the Christians were called Sibyllianists, from their quoting the Sibyls so often. But Origen, in his answer to Celsus, l. 7, challenges him to shew any interpolation made by the Christians, and appeals to the heathen copies which were in their own possession, and kept with great care.

But what I have quoted to you out of Virgil was before Christ was born, and therefore clear of all these objections.

De. Then the Jews must have had some hand in them. As likewise in that eastern tradition you have spoken of.

Chr. If so, you must suppose that the Jews had it from their own prophets. And this will be a strong confirmation that the time of the Messiah's coming was plainly told in the prophets.

(11.) *De.* What say the Jews to this? For I cannot imagine how they can get off from it.

Chr. Some of them say, that the Messiah put off his coming at the appointed time, because of their sins. Others say, he did come at the time, but has concealed himself ever since.

De. These are mere excuses. Do they pretend any prophecy for this? But to what purpose? For these excuses show, that prophecies are no proofs, because if they may be thus put off, they can never be known. And they may be put off and put off to the end of the world.

(12.) *Chr.* But now, Sir, as to your point. If this general expectation, both east and west, of the great King of the Jews to be born about that very time that he did come, was occasioned

by the Jewish tradition of it, it strengthens the truth of the Holy Scriptures, whence the Jews had it. But otherwise, if God, we know not how, did send such a notion into the minds of men, all over the world, at that particular time, and never the like, either before or since; then the miracle will be greater, and the attestation to the coming of Christ stronger, and, as you said, it will be more wonderful and more convincing to you, than the star was to the wise men in the east.

De. I must take time to answer this. I made nothing at all of this of the Magi, and the star, and of Herod's slaying the infants upon it. I thought it a ridiculous story, and to have no foundation in the world. But when I see Suetonius telling us of the decree of the Senate of Rome to destroy all the children born that year, and for the same reason, for fear of this great King that was then to be born; I must think there was a strange chiming in of things here, one to answer the other. I know not how it happened: by chance, or how?

(13.) *Chr.* You cannot imagine there could be any concert in this matter. That the Chaldeans, and Romans, and Jews, should all agree upon the point, and hit it so exactly, without any one of them discovering the contrivance! especially when it was so terrible to both the Romans and the Jews, that they took such desperate methods to prevent it as to destroy their own children!

De. It is ridiculous to talk of a concert. I will not put my cause upon that. Would they concert what they thought their own destruction? Besides, the Jews and Romans were then enemies; and the Chaldeans were far off, and had little correspondence with either of them. And such an universal notion could not be concerted. Whole nations could not be trusted with a secret. And if they all kept it, and against their own interest too, it would be as great a miracle as any in your Bible.

(14.) *Chr.* How much more impossible is it to suppose, That there should be a concert between different ages, between all the ages from Adam downwards, in all those prophecies of the coming of the Messiah? How should they know it but by revelation? And would they have all agreed so exactly as to the time, place, manner, and other circumstances, if it had been a forgery contrived by different persons and in different ages?

(15.) This is an argument which Saint Peter thought stronger than the conviction even of our outward senses; for having set down what he and the other two apostles had both seen and heard upon the holy Mount, he adds, "We have yet a more sure word (that is, a stronger proof) of prophecy, whereunto ye do dwell to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts," (2 Pet. i. 19.) And he enforces it thus, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

De. I will grant his argument so far, That it is easier to suppose the senses of three men, or of all the men in the world, to be imposed upon, than that Adam, Abraham, and I, had concerted together. But I will not give you my answer yet. Have you any more to say upon this head of prophecy?

Chr. I need say no more till your answer comes. For you have granted that this proof is stronger than what we see with our eyes.

(16.) But that your answer may take in all together, I will give you something farther. I have set down already some of the great prophecies of the coming of Christ, his sufferings, death, and resurrection. But there are others which reach to several minute circumstances, such as cannot be applied to any other fact that ever yet happened, and which could not have been foreseen by any but God; nor were known by the actors who did them, else they had not done them. For they would not have fulfilled the prophecies that went before of Christ in applying them to him whom they crucified as a false Christ.

See then how literally several of these prophecies were fulfilled. As (Psal. lxix. 21,) "They gave me gall to eat, and vinegar to drink." Then read Matt. xxvii. 34, "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall." It is said, (Psal. xxii. 16, 17, 18,) "They pierced my hands and my feet—They stand staring and looking upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." As if it had been wrote after John, xix. 23, 24. It was merely accidental in the soldiers; they would not tear his coat, because it was woven and without seam, therefore they cast lots for it: thus fulfilling this Scripture, without any knowledge of theirs, for they were Roman soldiers, and knew nothing of the Scripture. Again it is said, (Psal. xxii. 7, 8,) "All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him." Compare this with Matt. xxvii. 39, 41, 42, 43, "And they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God." It is said again, (Zech. xi. 10,) "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." His very price was foretold, and how the money should be disposed of, (Zech. xi. 13,) fulfilled Matt. xxvii. 6, 7. And his riding into Jerusalem upon an ass,

(Zech. ix. 9,) which the learned Rabbi Saadia expounds of the Messiah. That he should suffer with malefactors, (Isai. liii. 12.) That his body should not lie so long in the grave as to see corruption, (Psal. xvi. 10.)

Many other circumstances are told which cannot be applied to any but to Christ. I have set down these few, that you may take them into consideration when you think fit to give your answer as to this head of prophecies.

And you are to take care to find some other fact guarded with prophecies like this. Or else you must confess that there is no other fact that has such evidence as this.

(17.) But, before I leave this head, I must mention the prophecies in our Bible of things yet to come to the end of the world, and of the new heavens and new earth that shall succeed.

De. These can be no proofs here, because we cannot see the fulfilling of them.

Chr. You may believe what is to come, by the fulfilling you have seen of what is past. But I bring this now to show you, that there is no other law or history in the world that so much as pretends to this, or to know what is to come. This is peculiar to the Holy Bible, as being written from the mouth of God.

You have seen how the current of the prophecies of the Old Testament did point at and centre in that great event, the coming of the Messiah.

When he was come, then he told us more plainly of what was to come after him, even to the consummation of all things. And by what we have seen exactly fulfilled of all he told us to this time, we must believe what remains yet to come.

(18.) How particularly did he foretell the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, (Matt. xxiv ;) and that that age should not pass till it should be fulfilled? And his very expression was literally fulfilled, that there should not be left one stone upon another in the temple ; for the very foundations of it were ploughed up by Turnus Rufus. (See Scaliger's Canon. Isagog. p. 304.)

When Jerusalem was first besieged, it was full of Christians. But the siege was raised unaccountably, and for no reason that history gives. In which time the Christians, seeing those signs come to pass which Christ had foretold would precede its destruction, and particularly laying hold of that caution he gave, " Then let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains," and that in such haste, as that he that was in the field was not to return to Jerusalem to fetch his garment, or he on the house-top there to stay to take his goods with him ; accordingly, all the Christians left Jerusalem, and fled to Pella, a city in the mountains. And as soon as they were all gone, the Romans returned and renewed the siege. And so it came to pass, that when Titus sacked the city there was not one Christian found there, and the destruction fell only upon the unbelieving Jews. The others escaped, as Lot out of Sodom, by believing the prediction of that ruin.

(19.) Another very remarkable prediction of our blessed Lord in that same chapter was of the many false Christs that should come after him ; and he warned the Jews not to follow them, for that it would be their destruction. " Behold (says he, ver. 25,) I have told you before." But they would not believe him ; and accordingly it came to pass. Josephus in his Antiquities of the Jews, (l. xviii. c. 12. l. xx. c. 6,) and De Bell. Jud. (l. vii. c. 31,) tells of abundance of these false Messiahs who appeared before the destruction of Jerusalem, and led the people into the wilderness, where they were miserably destroyed. The very thing of which our Saviour cautioned them, (ver. 26,) " If they say unto you, Behold, he (that is, Christ) is in the desert, go not forth." And Josephus says, (De Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 12,) that the chief cause of their obstinacy in that war with the Romans, was their expectation of a Messiah to come and deliver them, which brought on their ruin, and made them deaf to the offers of Titus, who courted them to peace.

And since the destruction of Jerusalem there have been so many false Messiahs, that Johannes à Lent has wrote a history of them, printed Herbonæ, 1697 ; which brings them down as far as the year 1682, and tells the lamentable destruction of the Jews in following them.

(20.) But the next prophecy of our blessed Lord which I produce is more remarkable than these ; and of which you see the fulfilling in a great measure, namely, That his Gospel should prevail over all the world, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it : and this told when he was low and despised, and had but twelve poor fishermen for his followers : and that his religion should conquer, not by the sword, like Mahomet's, but by patient suffering, as lambs among wolves. And in this state the Church endured most terrible persecutions, when all the rage of hell was let loose against her, for the first three hundred years, without any help but from Heaven only ; till at last, by the Divine Providence, the great Emperor of Rome, and other mighty kings and princes, without any force or compulsion, did voluntarily and freely submit their sceptres to Christ.

No religion that ever was in the world was so begun, so propagated, and did so prevail : and hence we assuredly trust, that what remains will be fulfilled, of the promise of Christ to his Church in the latter days.

But I speak now only of this prophecy so long beforehand, and when there was so little appearance of its coming to pass, so far as we have seen already.

Let me here remember one particular passage foretold by Christ, concerning the woman who anointed his body to the burying, That "wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her," (Mark, xiv. 8, 9.) And we see how it is spoken of to this day.

De. If this book had been lost, we had not heard of this prophecy.

Chr. So you may say of all the Bible, or of any other book: But Providence has fulfilled this prophecy by preserving the book; and it is a prophecy that this book, at least this fact of the woman, should be preserved for ever, and it may be preserved though that book were lost.

(21.) *De.* When prophecies are fulfilled, and the events come to pass, they are plain to every body; but why might they not have been as plain from the beginning? And then there could have been no dispute about them, as if it had been said, that such a one by name, at such a time, and in such a place, should do such things, &c.

Chr. Because God having given man free will, he does not force men to do any wicked thing: and it would be in the power of wicked men to defeat a prophecy against themselves, as to the circumstance of time, place, or the manner of doing the thing.

For example, if the Jews had known that Christ had told his Apostles he was to be crucified, they would not have done it; they would have stoned him as they did Saint Stephen; for that was the death appointed by the law for blasphemy: and they several times attempted to have stoned Christ for this, because he said I am the Son of God, (John, viii. 59; x. 31, 32, 33.) But crucifixion was a death by the Roman law. Therefore the Jews, to fulfil this prophecy (but not knowing it) delivered Christ to the Romans to be put to death. Yet he told them so much of it, that after he was crucified they might know it, as he said to them, (John, viii. 28.) "When ye have lift up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am he." And chap. x. 32, 33. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." But they understood it not till they had done it, then they knew what the lifting up meant. And chap. xviii. 31, 32, when Pilate would have had them judge him according to their law, which was stoning, they were cautious at this time only, and said, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death; because they were then under the government of the Romans. But the next words show the design of Providence in it, "that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die." They had no such caution upon them when they stoned Saint Stephen after this, nor the many times before when they took up stones to stone the same Jesus.

Then, again, the piercing his side with the spear was no part of the Roman sentence of execution, but happened seemingly by mere accident; for the sentence of the law was, to hang upon the cross till they were dead; but that being the day of preparation for the Sabbath, which began that evening soon after Christ and the thieves were fastened to the cross, before it could be supposed they were dead, therefore, "that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day," the Jews besought Pilate that their legs might be broken (which was no part of the sentence neither, but done) lest they should escape when taken down. Accordingly the legs of the thieves were broken, for they were yet alive, and the reason why they brake not the legs of Christ was, because "they saw that he was dead already; but to make sure, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear: little knowing that they were then fulfilling prophecies, as, that "a bone of him should not be broken;" and again, "They shall look on him whom they pierced." As little did the soldiers think of it when they were casting lots upon his vesture: and the chief priests (if they had known it or reflected upon it) would not have upbraided him in the very words that were foretold in Psalm xxii. which I have before quoted. And they would have contrived the money they gave to Judas to have been one piece more or less than just thirty: they would not have come so punctually in the way of that prophecy, (Zech. xi. 12, 13.) "They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." And they would have bought any other field with it, but especially not that of the Potter, which Zechariah there likewise mentions.

And as the enemies of Christ did not know they were fulfilling these prophecies of him, so neither did his disciples at the time when they were so doing. And it is said, (John, xii. 16.) "These things understood not his disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him." This makes the fulfilling these prophecies yet more remarkable.

Where Providence sees that prophecies will not be minded, they are more express and plain: as likewise where the passions and interests of men will hurry them on towards fulfilling them. Thus, Alexander the Great is described as plainly almost as if he had been named, (Dan. viii. 20, 21, 22.) And it is said, that this prophecy, which was showed him by the High Priest at Jerusalem, did encourage him in his expedition against the Persians. But it is not so when a man is to do foolish

and wicked things, and things hurtful to himself; for if these were told plainly and literally, it would be in his power to do otherwise, unless God should force his will, and then he would not be a free agent.

(22.) *De.* I must have recourse to the Jews in answer to these prophecies of the Messiah which you have brought; for they, owning these Scriptures as revelations given them by God, must have some solution or other for them, or else give themselves up as self-condemned.

Chr. The answers the Jews give will convince you the more, and render them indeed self-condemned.

Before the coming of Christ, the Jews understood these texts, as we do, to be certainly meant of the Messiah, and of none other. But since that time they have forced themselves to put the most strained and contradictory meanings upon them; for they agree not in their expositions, and the one does manifestly destroy the other.

Thus, that text I before quoted, (Gen. xlix. 10,) was understood by the Chaldee and ancient Jewish interpreters to be meant of the Messiah. Yet of their modern Rabbies some say, that it was meant of Moses; but others reject that, *first*, Because it is plain that the gathering of the nations or Gentiles was not to Moses; *secondly*, Because the sceptre was not given to Judah till long after Moses. The first of it that appears was Judg. xx. 18, when Judah was commanded by God to "go up first," and lead the rest of the tribes; and David was the first king of the tribe of Judah. *Thirdly*, Because Moses did prophesy of a greater than himself to come, to whom the people should hearken, (Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.)

For these reasons, other Rabbies say it could not be meant of Moses, but they apply it to the tabernacle at Shiloh. This was only for the sake of the word *Shiloh*, for otherwise it bears no resemblance either to the gathering of the Gentiles, or the sceptre of Judah: and though the house of God was first set up at Shiloh, yet it was removed from thence, and established at Jerusalem; which was the place of which Moses spoke that God would place his name there, as I shall show you presently.

This interpretation therefore being rejected, other Rabbies say, that this prophecy must be meant of the Messiah, but that by the word *sceptre* is not to be understood a sceptre of rule or government, but of correction and punishment, and that this should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came. But the text explaining *sceptre* by the word *lawgiver*, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came, overthrows this interpretation, and shows the sceptre here mentioned to be meant of a sceptre of rule and government. Again, Joshua gave them rest from their enemies round about; and the land had rest many years under their Judges; and David delivered them out of the hands of their enemies; and under Solomon they were the richest and happiest people upon earth; and frequently after, they were in good condition and at ease; so that the sceptre of correction did often depart from them before Shiloh came.

This is so evident, that others of them allow this sceptre to be a sceptre of government; but they say the meaning is, that the sceptre shall not finally or for ever depart from Judah, because the Messiah will come and restore it to Judah again. But this is adding to the text, and making a new text of it, and quite different from the former, nay, directly opposite to it; for the text speaks only of the departing of the sceptre, but nothing of the restoring it; and it cannot be restored till once it is departed: therefore this exposition saying it "shall depart," and the text saying it "shall not depart," are directly contrary.

Lastly, There are others who throw aside all these excuses, and say, that the sceptre or dominion is not yet departed from Judah, for that some Jew or other may have some sort of rule or government, in some part or other of the world, though we know it not.

De. As if the Jews (who hold the best correspondence with one another of any people) could not tell this place, if there were any such where they were governed by their own laws, and by governments of their own nation, though in subjection to the government of the country where they lived.

These salvos of the Jews are contradictory to each other, they are poor excuses, and show their cause to be perfectly destitute.

But I have an objection against this prophecy, which affects both Jews and Christians: that the regal sceptre did depart from the tribe of Judah long before your Shiloh came.

Chr. First, This prophecy does not call the sceptre a regal sceptre, and therefore denotes only government in the general.

Secondly, The whole land and the nation took their name from Judah. It was called the land of Judah, and the nation took the name of Jews from Judah, as before that of Hebrews from Heber their progenitor, (Gen. x. 25.) And this prophecy spoke of those times when Judah should be the father of his country, and the whole nation should be comprehended under the name of Judah: and therefore Judah holds the sceptre wherever a Jew governs. Besides, the word *sceptre* and *throne* are used in relation to inferior governors, to tributary kings, and kings in captivity; thus it is said, that thirty-seven years after the captivity of Judah, the king of Babylon set the throne of Jehoiachin king of Judah above the thrones of kings that were

with him in Babylon, (2 Kings, xxv. 27, 28.) This was more than half the time of the captivity ; and this was continued to Jehoiachin all the "days of his life," (ver. 29, 30,) which might last till the end, or near the end, of the captivity. But besides the king, the Jews had governors of their own nation allowed them, who were their archontes or rulers ; and they enjoyed their own laws, though in subjection to the king of Babylon. The elders of Judah (which was a name of government) are mentioned in the captivity, (Ezek. viii. 1.) And the chief of the fathers of Judah, and the Priests and the Levites, (Ezra, i. 5.) And after the captivity, they had a trishahta or governor of their own nation, (Ezra, ii. 63 ; Neh. viii. 9.) And the throne or the governor is named, (Neh. iii. 7.) So that here was still the throne or sceptre of Judah.

And from the time of the Maccabees to their conquest by the Romans, the supreme authority was in their high priests ; as it was afterwards, but in subjection to the Romans ; and they enjoyed their own laws. "Pilate said unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law," (John, xviii. 31.) And though they answered, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death ;" the reason is given in the next verse, "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying what death he should die." For crucifixion was a Roman death, but stoning by the law of Moses was the death for blasphemy, of which they accused him. And they afterwards stoned Saint Stephen for the same (alleged) crime, according to their own law. Their high priests and council had full liberty to meet when they pleased, and to act according to their law. And Christ himself owns they "sat in Moses's seat," (Matt. xxiii. 2.) The high priest sat to judge Saint Paul, who applied to him that text, (Exod. xxii. 28,) "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people, or speak evil of him," as the Apostle renders it, (Acts, xxiii. 5.) So that here the government was still in the Jews, though in subjection to the Romans ; and thus it continued till the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans. But since that time they are dispersed in all countries, and have no governor or ruler of their own in any. The sceptre is entirely departed from them.

De. It is impossible but the Jews must see the difference of their state before the destruction of Jerusalem, and since, and of their condition as to government in their several captivities, and now in their dispersion. In the former, they had still a face of government left among themselves : but now, none at all. And their excuses, which you have mentioned, render them indeed self-condemned.

What do they say to that text you have quoted, (Jer. xxiii. 17, &c.) that David should never want a son to sit upon his throne, &c. You Christians apply it to Christ, who was called the Son of David ; but to whom do the Jews apply it ?

Chr. Some of them say, that David will be raised from the dead, and made immortal, to fulfil this prophecy. Others say, that after the Messiah, who is to be of the seed of David, he shall thenceforward no more want a son, &c.

De. Both these interpretations are in flat contradiction to the text. The text says, shall never want ; these say, shall want for a long time ; they must confess now for near seventeen hundred years together, and how much longer they cannot tell, they have had none to sit in Moses's seat, or on the throne of David, though in subjection to their enemies, as they had in the worst of their captivities ; but have not now in their dispersion.

But is there any difference betwixt what you call the cathedra, or seat of Moses, and the throne of David ?

Chr. None as to government ; for Moses was king in Jeshurun, (Deut. xxiii. 5,) but David was the first king of the tribe of Judah, which was to be the name of the whole nation ; and Christ was called the King of the Jews. It was the title set upon his cross. But after him none ever had that title to this day.

De. This is not to be answered by the Jews. But pray what person is it, do they say, was meant in chap. liii. of Isaiah, which you have quoted ?

Chr. They will not have it to be any person at all ; for they can find none, except our Christ, to whom these prophecies can any way be applied. Therefore they say, it must be meant of the nation of the Jews, whose sufferings, &c. are there described in the name of a person, by which the people are to be understood.

De. But the people and the person there described as suffering, &c. are plainly contradistinguished. It is said, ver. 8. "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." And ver. 3. 4, &c. "We" (the people) "like sheep have gone astray—And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," that is, of the people ; who are here called wicked. But he is called "My righteous servant, who did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Therefore this people and the person here spoken of could not be the same. They are opposed to each other. The one called righteous, the other wicked. The one to die for the other, and to justify the other. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," &c.

Chr. The Jews, before Christ came, understood this prophecy of the Messiah, as indeed it can be applied to none other ; but the Jews since Christ, to avoid the force of this and other prophecies which speak of the sufferings

and death of the Messiah, have invented two Messiahs, one Ben-Joseph of the tribe of Ephraim, who is to be the suffering Messiah, the other Ben-David, of the tribe of Judah, who is to triumph gloriously, and shall raise from the dead all the Israelites, and among them the first Messiah, Ben-Joseph.

De. Does the Scripture speak of two Messiahs, and the one raising the other?

Chr. No, not a word; but only of the Messiah, which shows it spoke only of one.—It mentions the two-fold state of this Messiah, the first suffering, the second triumphing; whence the modern Jews have framed to themselves these two Messiahs.

De. This is shameful! And plainly to avoid the prophecies against them.

Chr. This of Isaiah is fully explained, Dan. ix. 24, &c. where it is said, that the Messiah the Prince should be cut off, but not for himself, but for the transgressions of the people, "to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity." And that this was to be within four hundred and ninety years after the building of the second temple, which I have mentioned before.

De. I cannot imagine how the Jews get clear of this.

Chr. They cannot. But in spite to it, they seek now to undervalue the whole book of Daniel, though they dare not totally reject it, because it was received by their forefathers, who preceded Christ. But about a hundred years after Christ they made a new distribution of the books of the Old Testament, different from their fathers, and took the book of Daniel out of the middle of the prophets, where it was placed before, and put it last of all. But more than this, to lessen the credit of this book, they adventured to shake the authority of their whole Scriptures; for they took upon them to make a distinction of the books of the Scripture, and made them not all inspired or canonical, but some of them they called Ἁγιόγραφα, that is, holy or pious books, though in a lower class than those called inspired or canonical Scriptures. And they put the book of Daniel into the inferior class; but in that book Daniel speaks of himself as having received these prophecies immediately from an angel of God. Wherein, if he told us the truth, it must be put in the highest class of canonical Scripture; but if he told us false, then this book is quite through all a lie, and blasphemous too, in fathering it all upon God! So that the distinction of our modern Jews confounds themselves. And since they allow this book of Daniel a place among the Ἁγιόγραφα, or holy writings, they cannot deny it to be truly canonical, as all their fathers owned it before the coming of Christ. And if they throw off Daniel, they must discard Ezekiel too; for he gives the highest attestation to Daniel that can be given to mortal man; he makes him one of the three most righteous men to be found in all ages, and the very standard of wisdom to the world, (Ezek. xiv. 14, 20; xxviii. 3.)

De. What do they say to Hag. ii. 7, 9. where it is said, that Christ was to come into the second Temple.

Chr. Some of them say, that this must be meant of a temple yet to be built.

De. This is denying the prophecy; for it is said, (ver. 7.) "I will fill this house with glory," &c. And (ver. 9.) "The glory of this latter house—and in this place will I give peace," &c. But I am not to defend the cause of the Jews; it seems to me very desperate. I own, you Christians have the advantage of them in this.

Chr. And I hope it will have so much effect with you, as to make you consider seriously of the weight of this argument of prophecy we have discoursed.

De. Let us at present leave this head of prophecy. Have you any farther evidence to produce for your Christ?

(VII.) *Chr.* I have one more, which is yet more peculiar to him than even that of prophecy. For whatever weak pretence may be made of some prophecies among the Heathen, as to some particular events, of little consequence to the world, yet they never offered at that sort of evidence I am next to produce: which is not only prophecies of the fact, and that from the beginning of the world, but also types, resemblances, and exhibitions of the fact, in outward sensible institutions, ordained as law from the beginning, and to continue till the fact they prefigured should come to pass.

(1.) Such were the sacrifices instituted by God immediately upon the Fall, (and upon his promise of the life-giving seed, Gen. iii. 15.) as types of that great and only propitiatory sacrifice for sin which was to come; whose blood they saw continually shed (in type) in their daily sacrifices.

These were continued in the heathen posterities of Adam by immemorial tradition from the beginning, though they had forgot the beginning of them, as they had of the world, or of mankind; yet they retained so much of the reason of them, as that they had universally the notion of a vicarious atonement, and that our sins were to be purged by the blood of others suffering in our stead. As likewise, that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, but that a more noble blood was necessary. Hence they came to human sacrifices, and at last to sacrifice the greatest, most noble, and most virtuous; and such offered themselves to be sacrificed for the safety of the people. As Codrus, King of the Athenians, who sacrificed himself on this account. The like did Curtius for the Romans, as supposing himself the bravest

and most valuable of them all. So the Decii, the Fabii, &c. Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia for the Greek army; and the King of Moab sacrificed his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, (2 Kings, iii. 27.) Thus the sacrificing (not their servants or slaves, but) their children to Moloch, is frequently mentioned of the Jews, which they did in imitation of the heathen, as it is said, (Psal. cvi. 35—38,) "They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works; and they served their idols. Yea they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto the idols of Canaan," &c. Pursuant to which notion, the prophet introduceth them arguing thus: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah, vi. 6, 7.) They were plainly searching after a complete and adequate satisfaction for sin; and they thought it necessary.

De. No doubt they thought so; but that did not make it necessary.

Chr. The doctrine of satisfaction is a subject by itself; which I have treated elsewhere. But I am not come so far with you yet; I am now only speaking of sacrifices as types of the sacrifice of Christ.

(2.) And besides sacrifice in general, there were afterwards some particular sacrifices appointed more nearly expressive of our redemption by Christ. As the Passover, which was instituted in memory of the redemption of the children of Israel (that is, the Church) out of Egypt, (the house of bondage of this world, where we are in servitude to sin and misery) in the night when God slew all the first-born of the Egyptians: but the destroyer was to pass over those houses where he saw the blood of the Paschal Lamb upon the door-posts. And it was to be eaten with unleavened bread, expressing the sincerity of the heart, without any mixture or taint of wickedness. And thus it is applied, (1 Cor. v. 7, 8,) "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

(3.) There was a double exhibition of Christ on the great day of expiation, which was but once a-year; on which day only the high priest entered into the holy of holies (which represented heaven, Exod. xxv. 40; Wisd. ix. 8; Heb. ix. 24,) with the blood of the sacrifice, whose body was burnt without the camp; to show God's detestation of sin, and that it was to be removed far from us: and that we must go out of the camp, that is, out of this world, bearing our reproach for sin, before we can be quite freed from it. See how exactly this was fulfilled in Christ, (Heb. xiii. 11—14,) "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach; for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

The other lively representation of Christ's bearing our sins, and taking them away from us, which was made on the same day of expiation, was the scape-goat, (Lev. xvi. 21, 22,) "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities, into a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." This is so plain, that it needs no application.

(4.) Another express representation of Christ was the brasen serpent in the wilderness, by looking upon which the people were cured of the stings of the fiery serpents. So in looking upon Christ by faith, the sting of the old serpent the devil is taken away. And the lifting up the serpent did represent Christ being lifted up upon the cross. Christ himself makes the allusion, (John, iii. 14,) "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

(5.) He was likewise represented by the manna; for he was the true bread that came down from heaven to nourish us unto eternal life, (John, vi. 31—36.)

(6.) As also by the rock whence the waters flowed out to give them drink in the wilderness. "And that rock was Christ," (1 Cor. x. 4.)

(7.) And he was not only their meat and drink, but he was also their constant guide, and led them in a pillar of fire by night, and of a cloud by day. And the cloud of glory in the temple, in which God appeared, was by the Jews understood as a type of the Messiah, who is the true Shechina or habitation of God.

(8.) The Sabbath is called a shadow of Christ, (Col. ii. 17.) It was a figure of that eternal rest procured to us by Christ; therefore it is called a sign of the perpetual covenant, (Exod. xxxi. 16, 17; Ezek. xx. 12.)

(9.) And such a sign was the temple at Jerusalem; at which place, and none other, the sacrifices of the Jews were to be offered, (Deut. xii. 11, 13, 14.) Because Christ was to be sacrificed there, and as a token of it, those sacrifices which were types of him were to be offered only there.

And so great stress was laid upon this, that no sin of the Jews is oftener remembered than their breach of this command. It was a blot set upon their several reformations, otherwise good and commendable in the sight of God, that the high places, where they used to sacrifice, were not taken away. This is marked as the great defect in the reformation of Asa, (1 Kings, xv. 14;) of Jehoshaphat, (1 Kings, xxii. 43;) of Jehoash, (2 Kings, xii. 3;) of Amaziah, (2 Kings, xv. 4;) of Jotham, (verse 35.) But they were taken away by Hezekiah, (2 Kings, xviii. 4,) and the people instructed to sacrifice and burn incense at Jerusalem only, (2 Chron. xxxii. 12; Isa. xxxvi. 7.)

There was likewise a farther design of Providence in limiting their sacrifices to Jerusalem, which was, that after the great propitiatory sacrifice of Christ had been once offered there, God was to remove the Jews from Jerusalem, that they might have no sacrifice at all (as, for that reason, they have not had in any part of the world near these seventeen hundred years past) to instruct them. That (as the apostle speaks to them, Heb. x. 26,) "there remaineth no more" or "other sacrifice for sins." And since, by the Law, their sins were to be purged by sacrifice, they have now no way to purge their sins; to force them, as it were, to look back upon that only sacrifice which can purge their sins. And till they return to that, they must have no sacrifice at all, but die in their sins. As Jesus said unto them, "I go my way, and ye shall die in your sins.—For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," (John, viii. 21, 24.)

And Daniel prophesied expressly, that soon after the death of the Messiah, the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary should be destroyed, and that the sacrifice should cease, "Even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate," (Dan. ix. 26, 27.)

And this desolation of theirs, and what was determined upon them, was told them likewise by Hosea, (iii. 4,) "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a sacrifice." But he says in the next verse, That "in the latter days they shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king," that is, the Son of David, their Prince and Messiah; as he is called Messiah the Prince, (Dan. ix. 25.)

Thus, as salvation was of the Jews, because Christ was to come of them, so this salvation was only to be had at Jerusalem, where he was to suffer, and by which only salvation was to be had.

(10.) *De.* This argument is to the Jews; and if I were a Jew it would move me, because they never were so long before without king, temple, or sacrifice.

Chr. But the prophecies of it, and these fulfilled as you have seen; and Christ being so plainly pointed at, and the place of his passion, by limiting the sacrifices to Jerusalem only; and by causing the legal sacrifices to cease throughout the world, to show that they were fulfilled: all this is a strong evidence to you of the truth of these things, and of our Jesus being the Messiah, or Christ, who was prophesied of.

De. I cannot deny but there is something remarkable in this, which I will take time to consider; but I do not see how the Jews can stand out against this, because this mark given by Daniel of the Messiah, that soon after his death the sacrifice should cease, cannot agree to any after Messiah who should now come, so many ages after the sacrifice has ceased.

Chr. Since we have fallen into the subject of the Jews, I will give you another prophecy which cannot be fulfilled in any after Messiah whom the Jews expect. And it will be also a confirmation to you of the truth of the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures.

Thus God speaks, (Jer. xxxiii. 20—22,) "Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me."

Now let the Jews tell in which son of David this is fulfilled, except only in our Christ? And how this is made good to the priests and Levites, otherwise than as Isaiah prophesied, (lxvi. 21,) "And I will also take of them" (the Gentiles) "for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord." And as it is thus applied, 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9; and Rev. i. 6; and this evangelical priesthood is multiplied as the stars of heaven, (which they are frequently called,) not like the tribe of Levi, which could not afford priests to all the earth.

And as I said before of Jerusalem and the sacrifices there, that they are ceased, to show they are fulfilled, so here, after this Son of David was come, all his other sons ceased, and the very genealogy of their tribes, and so of Judah, is lost, as also of the tribe of Levi; so that the Jews can never tell, if any after

Messiah should appear, whether he were of the tribe of Judah, far less whether he were of the lineage of David: nor can they show the genealogy of any they call Levites now among them.

This is occasioned by their being dispersed among all nations, and yet preserved a distinct people from all the earth, though without any country of their own, or king, or priest, or temple, or sacrifice. And they are thus preserved by the providence of God, so as never any nation was since the foundation of the world, to show the fulfilling of the prophecies concerning them, and the judgments pronounced against them for their crucifying their Messiah; and that their conversion may be more apparent to the world, and their being gathered out of all nations, and restored to Jerusalem, (as is promised them) when they shall come to acknowledge their Messiah.

And God not permitting them to have any king or governor upon earth, ever since their last dispersion by the Romans, (lest they might say that the sceptre was not departed from Judah,) is to convince them, when God shall take the veil off their heart, that no other Messiah, who can come hereafter, can answer this prophecy of Jeremiah, or that of Jacob, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came.

(11.) And it is wonderful to consider how expressly their present state is prophesied of, that it could not be more literal, if it were to be worded now by us who see it. As that they should be scattered into all countries, sifted as with a sieve among all nations, yet preserved a people; and that God would make an utter end of those nations who had oppressed them, and blot out their names from under heaven, (as we have seen it fulfilled upon the great empires of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Romans, who one after the other had miserably wasted the Jews,) but that the name of the Jews, the fewest and poorest of all nations, should remain for ever, and they a people distinct from all the nations in the world, though scattered among them all. Read the prophecies express upon this point, (Jer. xxx. 11; xxxi. 36, 37; xxxiii. 24—26; xlvi. 28; Isa. xxvii. 7; xxix. 7, 8; liv. 9, 10; lxv. 8; Ezek. vi. 8; xi. 16, 17; xii. 15, 16; Amos, ix. 8, 9; Zech. x. 9.) And it was foretold them long before that thus it would be, (Lev. xxvi. 44,) and this "in the latter days," (Deut. iv. 27, 30, 31.) Thus Moses told them of it so long before, as the after prophets frequently; and you see all these prophecies literally fulfilled and fulfilling. The like cannot be said of any other nation that ever was upon the earth! So destroyed, and so preserved! and for so long a time!—having worn out all the great empires of the world, and still surviving them!—to fulfil what was farther prophesied of them to the end of the world.

De. I cannot say but there is something very surprising in this: I never thought of it before. It is a living prophecy which we see fulfilled and still fulfilling at this day before our eyes. For we are sure these prophecies were not coined yesterday; and they are as express and particular as if they were to be wrote now, after the events are so far come to pass.

(12.) *Chr.* As the door was kept open to Christ before he came, by the many and flagrant prophecies of him, and by the types representing him, so was the door for ever shut after him, by those prophecies being all fulfilled and completed in him, and applicable to none who should come after him; and by all the types ceasing, the shadows vanishing, when the substance was come. No Messiah can come now before the sceptre depart from Judah, and the sacrifice from Jerusalem; before the sons of David (all except Christ) shall cease to sit upon his throne, none can come now within four hundred and ninety years of the building of the second temple, nor come into that very temple, as I have before showed was expressly prophesied by Daniel and Haggai.

De. I know not what the Jews can say, who own these prophecies.

Chr. They say, that the coming of the Messiah at the time spoke of in the Prophets, has been delayed because of their sins.

De. Then it may be delayed for ever, unless they can tell us when they will grow better. But, however, these prophecies have failed which spoke of the time of the Messiah's coming; and they can never be a proof hereafter, because the time is past. So that, according to this, they were made for no purpose, unless to show that they were false; that is, no prophecies at all!

But were these prophecies upon condition? Or was it said that the coming of the Messiah should be delayed if the Jews were sinful?

Chr. No: so far from it, that it was expressly prophesied that the coming of the Messiah should be in the most sinful state of the Jews, and to purge their sins, (Dan. ix. 24; Zech. xiii. 1.) And the ancient tradition of the Jews was pursuant to this, that at the coming of the Messiah the temple should be a den of thieves, (Rabbi Juda, in Masoreta,) and a time of great corruption, (Talmud. tit. de Synedrio, and de Ponderibus, &c.)

But more than this, the very case is put of their being most sinful, and it is expressly said, that this should not hinder the fulfilling of the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, spoke of as the Son of David, (2 Sam. vii. 14—16; Psal. lxxxix. 30, 33—37.)

But it was prophesied that they should not

know their Messiah, and should reject him when he came; that he should be a "stone of stumbling," and a "rock of offence" to them, (Isa. viii. 14, 15;) and that "their eyes should be closed," that they should not understand their own prophets, (xxix. 9—11;) that their builders should reject the head stone of their corner, (Psal. cxviii. 22;) and the like in several other places of their own prophets. And thus they mistook the prophecy concerning the coming of Elias, whom it is said they knew not, "but did to him what they listed;" and so the same of Christ, (Matt. xvii. 12.) And it is said, (1 Cor. ii. 8,) that "had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

De. This indeed solves the prophecies, both those of the coming of the Messiah, and of the Jews not knowing him, and therefore rejecting him; and likewise obviates this excuse of theirs; for if they were very sinful at that time, it was a greater punishment of their sin not to know, and to reject their Messiah, than his not coming at that time would have been.

Chr. The great sin mentioned for which they were punished by several captivities, was their idolatry, the last and longest of which captivities was that of seventy years in Babylon; since which time they have forsaken their idolatry, and have never been nationally guilty of it since, but always had it in the utmost abhorrence. But since their rejecting their Messiah, they have been now near seventeen hundred years—not in a captivity, where they might be all together, and enjoying their own law, government, and worship, in some manner, but — dispersed over all the world, without country of their own, or king, or priest, or temple, or sacrifice, or any prophet to comfort them, or give them hopes of a restoration; and all this come upon them, not for their old sin of idolatry, but from that curse they imprecated upon themselves when they crucified their Messiah, saying, "His blood be on us and on our children;" which cleaves unto them from that day to this, and is visible to all the world but to themselves! And what other sin can they think greater than idolatry, for which they have been punished so much more terribly than for all their idolatries? what other sin can this be, but their crucifying the Messiah? And here they may see their sinful state, which they allege as an excuse for their Messiah's not coming at the time foretold by the prophets, rendered tenfold more sinful by their rejecting him when he came.

De. This is a full answer, and convincing as to the Jews. But have you any more to say to me?

(13.) *Chr.* I have one thing more to offer, which may come under this head of types, and that is, persons who represented Christ in several particulars, and so might be called personal types.

And I will not apply these out of my own head, but as they are applied in the New Testament, which, having all the marks of the Old Testament, and stronger evidence than these, in those marks we are now upon, their authority is indisputable.

1. I begin with Adam, who gave us life and death too; and Christ came by his death to restore us to life again, even life eternal. Hence Christ is called the second Adam, and Adam is called the figure of Christ. The parallel betwixt them is insisted on, Rom. v. 12. to the end, and 1 Cor. xv. 45—50. Eve received her life from Adam, as the Church from Christ. She was taken out of the side of Adam when he was in a dead sleep; and after Christ was dead, the sacraments of water and blood flowed out of his side, that is, baptism, whereby we are born into Christ, and the sacrament of his blood, whereby we are nourished into eternal life.

2. Enoch was carried up bodily into heaven; as Elijah,—one under the patriarchal, the other under the legal dispensation. In both, the ascension of Christ was prefigured.

3. Noah, a preacher of righteousness to the old world, and father of the new. Who saved the church by water, the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.)

4. Melchisedec, that is, King of Righteousness, and King of Peace, and Priest of the most High God; who was made like unto the Son of God, a priest continually, (Heb. vii. 1, 2, 3.)

5. Abraham, the friend of God, and Father of the Faithful, the heir of the world, (Rom. iv. 13;) in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, (Gen. xviii. 18.)

6. Isaac, the heir of this promise, was born after his father and mother were both past the age of generation in the course of nature, (Gen. xvii. 17. xviii. 11.; Rom. iv. 19.; Heb. xi. 11, 12.) The nearest type that could be to the generation of Christ wholly without a man.

And his sacrifice had a very near resemblance to the sacrifice and death of Christ, who lay three days in the grave, and Isaac was three days a dead man (as we say in the law) under the sentence of death, (Gen. xxii. 4.) whence Abraham received him in a figure, (Heb. xi. 19.) that is, of the resurrection of Christ. And Abraham was commanded to go three days' journey to sacrifice Isaac upon the same mountain (according to the ancients) where Christ was crucified, and where Adam was buried. Again the common epithet of Christ, that is, "the only begotten of the Father, and his beloved Son," were both given to Isaac, (Gen. xxii. 2.; Heb. xi. 17.) For he was the only son that was begotten in that

miraculous manner, after both his parents were decayed by nature. And he was the only son of the promise, which was not made to the seed of Abraham in general, but "in Isaac shall thy seed be called," (Gen. xxi. 12.) "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," (Gal. iii. 16.)

And as Isaac, which signifies rejoicing, or laughing for joy, was thus the only begotten of his parents, so Abram signifies the glorious father, and Abraham (into which his name was changed on the promise of Isaac, Gen. xvii, 5, 16.) signifies the father of a multitude, to express the coming in of the Gentiles to Christ, and the increase of the Gospel; whence it is there said to Abraham, "A father of many nations have I made thee, and in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

Isaac, who was born by promise of a free woman, represented the Christian church, in opposition to Ishmael, who was born after the flesh, of a bond-maid, and signified the Jewish church under the law. (See this allegory carried on, Gal. iv. 21, to the end.)

7. Jacob, his vision of the ladder, (Gen. xxviii. 12.) shows the intercourse which was opened by Christ betwixt heaven and earth, by his making peace: and to this he alludes when he says, "Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man," (John, i. 15.)

And Jacob's wrestling with the angel, (Gen. xxxii. 24, &c. Hos. xii. 4.) and as it were prevailing over him by force to bless him, shows the strong and powerful intercession of Christ; whereby (as he words it, Matt. xi. 12) "heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Whence the name of Jacob was then turned to Israel, that is, one who prevails upon God, or has power over him; God representing himself here as overcome by us; and the name of Israel was ever after given to the Church. But much more so when Christ came, as he said, (Matt. xi. 12,) "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence," &c. that is, from the first promulgation of Christ being come. Thenceforward the Gentiles began to press into the Gospel, and as by force to take it from the Jews. This was signified in the name Jacob, that is, a supplanter, for the Gentiles here supplanted their elder brother the Jews, and stole the blessing and heirship from them.

8. Joseph was sold by his brethren out of envy; but it proved the preservation of them and all their families; and Christ was sold by his brethren out of envy, (Mark, xv. 10,) which proved the means of their redemption: and Christ, as Joseph, became lord over his brethren.

9. Moses calls Christ a prophet like unto himself, (Deut. xviii. 18.) He represented Christ the great lawgiver; and his delivering Israel out of Egypt, was a type of Christ's delivering his Church from the bondage of sin and hell.

10. Joshua, called also Jesus, (Heb. iv. 8,) overcame all the enemies of Israel, and gave them possession of the Holy Land, which was a type of heaven: and Christ appeared to Joshua, as Captain of the host of the Lord, (Josh. v. 14.) So that Joshua was his lieutenant representing him.

11. Sampson, who by his single valour and his own strength overcame the Philistines, and slew more at his death than in all his life, was a representation of Christ, who "trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him, but his own arm brought him salvation," (Isa. lxiii. 3, 5.) But his death completed his victory, whereby he overcame all the power of the enemy, "and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross," (Col. ii. 15.)

12. David, whose Son Christ is called, speaks frequently of him in his own person, and in events which cannot be applied to David, as (Psal. xvi. 10,) "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;" for David has seen corruption. Christ is said to sit upon the throne of David, (Isa. ix. 7.) And Christ is called by the name of David, (Hos. iii. 5,) and frequently in the prophets.

David from a shepherd became a king and a prophet, denoting the threefold office of Christ, pastoral, regal, and prophetical.

13. Solomon, the wisest of men, his peaceable and magnificent reign, represented the triumphal state of Christ's kingdom, which is described Psal. lxxii. inscribed for Solomon, (there called the king's son) but far exceeding the glory of his reign, or what can possibly be applied to him, (as ver. 5, 8, 11, 17.) But his reign came the nearest of any to that universal and glorious reign there described, particularly in his being chosen to build the temple, because he was a man of peace, and had shed no blood, like David his father, who conquered the enemies of Israel, but Solomon built the Church in full peace; and as it is particularly set down, 1 Kings, vi. 7, and no doubt he was ordered by God so to do, "That the house when it was building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building." Which did denote that the Church of Christ was to be built, not only in peace, but without noise or confusion, as Isaiah prophesied of him, (chap. xlii. 2.) "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street: a bruised reed shall he not break," &c.

He was not to conquer with the sword, as the Israelites subdued Canaan, but to overcome by meekness, and doing good to his enemies, and patiently suffering all injuries from them. And so he taught his followers, as Saint Paul says, (2 Tim. ii. 24,) "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves," &c.

And I cannot think but there was some imitation of this peaceable temple of Solomon in the temple of Janus among the Romans; for that was never to be shut but in time of peace, which happened rarely among them,—but three times in all their history. The last was in the reign of Augustus, in which time Christ came into the world, when there was a profound and universal peace: and so it became the Prince of Peace, whose birth was thus proclaimed by the angels, (Luke, ii. 14,) "Glory to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men." But to go on:

14. Jonah's being three days and nights in the belly of the whale, was a sign of Christ's being so long in the heart of the earth. Christ himself makes the allusion, (Matt. xii. 40.)

15. But as there were several persons, at several times, representing and prefiguring several particulars of the life and death of Christ; so there was one standing and continual representation of him appointed in the person of the high priest under the law; who, entering into the holy of holies once a-year, with the blood of the great expiatory sacrifice, and he only, to make atonement for sin, did lively represent our great High priest entering into heaven, once for all, with his own blood, to expiate the sins of the whole world. This is largely insisted upon in the epistle to the Hebrews, (chap. vii. viii. ix. x.)

And our deliverance by the death of Christ is represented, as in a picture, in that ordinance of the law, that the man-slayer, who fled to one of the cities of refuge, (which were all of the cities of the Levites) should not come out thence till the death of the high priest, and no satisfaction be taken till then, and then he should be acquitted and "return into the land of his possession." (Num. xxxv. 6, 25—28.) And I doubt not but the Gentiles had from hence their asyla or temples of refuge for criminals.

(1.) *De.* There is a resemblance in these things; but I would not have admitted them as a proof, if you had not supported them, at least most of them, with the authority of the New Testament. And it was not necessary that every one should be named in it; for those that are named are only occasionally; and I must take time to consider of the evidences you have brought for the authority of the New Testament, which you have made full as great, if not greater, than the evidences for the Old Testament.

Chr. I may say greater upon this head of prophecies and types, because these are no proofs till they are fulfilled; though then they prove the truth of these prophecies and types; and so the one confirms the other: but the whole evidence of the law is not made apparent till we see it fulfilled in the Gospel. For which reason I call the Gospel the strongest proof, not only as to itself, but likewise as to the law; and the Jews, as much as in them lies, have invalidated this strongest proof for the Old Testament, which is the fulfilling of it in the New. Nay, they have rendered these prophecies false, which, they say, were not fulfilled at the time they spake of, and never now can be fulfilled. And as no fact but that of our Christ alone ever had his evidence of prophecies and types from the beginning, so never can any other fact have it now while the world lasts.

(2.) *De.* Why do you say, Never can have it? For may not God make what fact he pleases, and give it what evidence he pleases?

Chr. But it cannot have the evidence that the fact of Christ has, unless at that distance of time hereafter, as from the beginning of the world to this day. Because God took care that the evidence of Christ should commence from the very beginning, in the promise of him made to Adam, and to be renewed by the prophets in all the after ages till he should come: and the evidence of him after his coming (in which I have instanced) and which continues to this day, before it can belong to any other, must have the same compass of time that has gone to confirm this evidence, else it has not the same evidence.

(3.) *De.* By this argument the evidence grows stronger the longer it continues, since you say, that the prophecies of the Scriptures reach to the end of the world, and so will be farther and farther fulfilling every day.

This is contrary to what one of your doctors has lately advanced, who pretends to calculate the age of evidences,* That in such a time they decay, and in such a time must die. And that the evidence of Christianity having lasted so long, is upon the decay, and must wear out soon, if not supplied by some fresh and new evidence.

Chr. This may be true as to fables which have no foundation: but is that prophecy I mentioned to you of the dispersion and yet wonderful preservation of the Jews, less evident to you, because it was made so long ago?

De. No. It is much more evident for that. If I had lived at the time when those prophecies were made, I fancy I should not have believed one word of them; but wondered at the assurance of those who ventured to foretel such improbable and almost impossible things.

And I should have thought the same of what you have told me of your Christ fore-

* Craig, Theologiæ Christianæ Principia Mathematica, 1699.

telling the progress of his Gospel, at the first so very slender appearance of it, and by such weak and improbable means, as only suffering and dying for it, which to me would have seemed perfect despair, and a giving up the cause. I should have thought of them, as of others, who prophesy of things after their time, that they might not be contradicted while they lived.

But my seeing so much of these prophecies concerning the Jews, and the progress of the Gospel, come to pass so long time after, is the only thing that makes me lay stress upon them, and which makes them seem wonderful to me.

Chr. When the prophecies shall all be fully completed at the end of the world, they will then seem strongest of all; they will then be undeniable; when Christ shall visibly descend from heaven, (in the same manner as he ascended) to execute both what he has promised and threatened. And in the mean time the prophecies lose none of their force, but their evidence increases, as "the light shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

(VIII.) *De.* I observe you have made no use of that common topic of the truth and sincerity of the penmen of the Scriptures, and what interest they could have in setting up these things if they had been false; for this can amount, at most, but to a probability: and you having produced those evidences which you think infallible, it might seem a lessening of your proof to insist upon bare probabilities; so that I suppose you give that up.

(1.) No, sir, I give it not up, though I have not made it the chief foundation of my argument; and if it were but a probability, it wants not its force, for it is thought unreasonable to deny a flagrant probability, where there is not as strong a probability on the other side, for then that makes a doubt: but otherwise, men generally are satisfied with probabilities, for that is the greatest part of our knowledge. If we will believe nothing but what carries an infallible demonstration along with it, we must be sceptics in most things of the world; and such were never thought the wisest men.

But besides, a probability may be sooner discerned by some, than the infallibility of a demonstration; therefore we must not lay aside probabilities.

But in this case, I think there is an infallible assurance,—as infallible as the senses of all mankind; and I suppose you will not ask a greater.

(2.) *De.* How can you say that, when the suffering of afflictions, and death itself, is but a probability of the truth of what is told us; because some have suffered death for errors?

Chr. But then they thought them true; and men may be deceived in their judgments, we see many examples of it. But if the facts related be such, as that it is impossible for those who tell them to be imposed upon themselves, or for those to whom they are told to believe them, if not true, without supposing an universal deception of the senses of mankind, then I hope I have brought the case up to that infallible demonstration I promised: and this is the case of the facts related in Holy Scripture. They were told by those who saw them, and did them, and they were told to those who saw them likewise themselves: and the relaters appealed to this: so that here could be no deceit.

De. I grant there is a great difference between errors in opinion and in fact; and that such facts as are told of Moses and of Christ, could not have passed upon the people then alive, and who were said to have seen them. And I find that both Moses, Christ, and the apostles, did appeal to what the people they spoke to had seen themselves.

Chr. With this consideration, their patient suffering, even unto death, for the truth of what they taught, will be a full demonstration of the truth of it.

(3.) Add to this, that their enemies who persecuted them, the Romans as well as Jews, to whom they appealed as witnesses of the facts, did not offer to deny them: That none of the apostates from Christianity did attempt to detect any falsehood in the facts; though they might have had great rewards if they could have done it, the Roman emperors being then persecutors of Christianity, and for three hundred years after Christ: And Julian the emperor, afterwards turned apostate, who had been initiated in the sacra of Christianity, yet could not he detect any of the facts.

(4.) And it was a particular providence for the further evidence of Christianity, that all the civil governments in the world were against it for the first three hundred years, lest it might be said, (as it is ridiculously in your Amintor) that the awe of the civil government might hinder those who could make the detection.

Now, sir, to apply all that we have said, I desire you would compare these evidences I have brought for Christianity, with those that are pleaded for any other religion.

There are but four in the world, namely, Christianity, Judaism, Heathenism, and Mahometanism.

(1.) Christianity was the first; for from the first promise of Christ made to Adam during the patriarchal and legal dispensations, all was Christianity in type, as I have showed.

And as to Moses and the Law, the Jews can give no evidence for that, which will not equally establish the truth of Christ and the Gospel. Nor can they disprove the facts of Christ by any topic, which will not likewise

disprove all those of Moses and the Prophets. So that they are hedged in on every side: they must either renounce Moses, or acknowledge Christ.

Moses and the Law have the first five evidences, but they have not the sixth and the seventh, which are the strongest.

This is as to Judaism before Christ came; but since, as it now stands in opposition to Christianity, in favour of any future Messiah, it has none of the evidences at all. On the contrary, their own prophecies and types make against them, for their prophecies are fulfilled, and their types are ceased, and cannot belong to any other Messiah who should come hereafter. They stand now more naked than the Heathens or the Mahometans.

(2.) Next for Heathenism, some of the facts recorded of their gods have the first and second evidences, and some the third, but not one of them the fourth, or any of the other evidences.

But truly and properly speaking, and if we will take the opinion of the heathens themselves, they were no facts at all, but mythological fables, invented to express some moral virtues or vices, or the history of nature, and power of the elements, &c. As likewise to turn great part of the History of the Old Testament into fable, and make it their own, for they disdained to borrow from the Jews. They made gods of men, and the most vicious too; insomuch that some of their wise men thought it a corruption of youth to read the history of their gods, whom they represented as notorious liars, thieves, adulterers, &c. though they had some mythology hid under all that.

And as men were their gods, so they made the first man to be father of the gods, and called him Saturn, not begot by any man, but the son of Cœlus and Vesta, that is, of heaven and earth. And his maiming his father with a steel scythe, was to show how heaven itself is impaired by time, whom they painted with wings and a scythe mowing down all things. And Saturn eating up his own children, was only to express how time devours all its own productions: and his being deposed by Jupiter his son, shows that time, which wears away all other things, is worn away itself at last.

Several of the heathen authors have given us the mythology of their gods, with which I will not detain you.

They expressed every thing, and worshipped every thing under the name of a god, as the god of sleep, of music, of eloquence, of hunting, drinking, love, war, &c. They had above thirty thousand of them; and in what they told of them, and as they described them, they often traced the sacred story.

Ovid begins his Metamorphoses with a perfect poetical version of the beginning of Genesis, "Ante Mare et Tellus."—Then goes on with the history of the creation; the formation of man out of the dust of the earth, and being made after the image of God, and to have dominion over the inferior creatures. Then he tells of the general corruption, and the giants before the flood, when the earth was filled with violence; for which all mankind, with the beasts and the fowl, were destroyed by the universal deluge, except only Deucalion and Pyrrha his wife, who were saved in a boat, which landed them on the top of Mount Parnassus; and that from these two the whole earth was re-peopled. I think it will be needless to detain the reader with an application of this to the history of the creation set down by Moses, of the flood, and the ark wherein Noah was saved, and the earth re-peopled by him, &c.

And Noah was plainly intended likewise in their god Janus, with his two faces, one old, looking backward to the old world that was destroyed; the other young, looking forward to the new world that was to spring from him.

So that even their turning the sacred history into fable, is a confirmation of it. And there can be no comparison betwixt the truths of the facts so attested, as I have showed, and the fables that were made from them.

(3.) Lastly, as to the Mahometan religion, it wants all the evidences we have mentioned, for there was no miracle said to be done by Mahomet, publicly and in the face of the world, but that only of conquering with the sword. Who saw his Mesra, or journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven in one night, and back in bed with his wife in the morning? Who was present and heard the conversation the moon had with him in his cave? It is not said there was any witness. And the Alcoran, c. vi. excuses his not working any miracles to prove his mission. They say that Moses and Christ came to show the clemency and goodness of God, to which miracles were necessary: but that Mahomet came to show the power of God, to which no miracle was needful but that of the sword.

(1.) And his Alcoran is a rhapsody of stuff, without head or tail, one would think wrote by a madman, with ridiculous titles, as the chapter of the Cow, of the Spider, &c.

And their legends are much more senseless than those of the Papists; as of an angel, the distance betwixt whose two hands is seventy thousand days' journey. Of a cow's head with horns which have forty thousand knots, and forty days' journey betwixt each knot: and others which have seventy mouths, and every mouth seventy tongues, and each tongue praises God seventy times a-day, in seventy different idioms. And of wax candles before the throne of God, which are fifty years' journey from one end to the other. The Alcoran says, the earth was created in two days, and is supported by an ox, which stands under it,

upon a white stone, with his head to the east, and his tail to the west, having forty horns, and as great a distance betwixt every horn as a man could walk in a thousand years' time.

Then their description of heaven, in a full enjoyment of wine, women, and other like gross sensual pleasures.

(2.) When you compare this with our Holy Scriptures, you will need no argument to make you see the difference. The Heathen orators have admired the sublime of the style of our Scriptures; no writing in the world comes near it, even with all the disadvantage of our translation, which, being obliged to be literal, must lose much of the beauty of it. The plainness and succinctness of the historical part, the melody of the Psalms, the instruction of the Proverbs, the majesty of the Prophets, and, above all, that easy sweetness in the New Testament, where the glory of heaven is set forth in a grave and moving expression, which yet reaches not the height of the subject; not like the flights of rhetoric, which set out small matters in great words. But the Holy Scriptures touch the heart, raise expectation, confirm our hope, strengthen our faith, give peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which is inexpressible. All which you will experience when you once come to believe; you will then bring forth these fruits of the Spirit, when you receive the word with pure affection, as we pray in our Litany.

(3.) But, sir, if there is truth in the Alcoran, then the Holy Scriptures are the word of God, for the Alcoran says so, and that it was sent to confirm them, even the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament; and it expressly owns our Jesus to be the Messiah. At the end of the fourth chapter it has these words: "The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is a prophet, and an angel of God, his Word and his Spirit, which he sent to Mary." But it gives him not the name of Son of God, for this wise reason, (chap. vi.) "How shall God have a son, who hath no wives?" Yet it owns Jesus to be born of a pure virgin, without a man, by the operation of the Spirit of God. And in the same chapter this Mahomet acknowledges his own ignorance, and says, "I told you not that I had in my power all the treasures of God, neither that I had knowledge of the future and past, nor do affirm that I am an angel; I only act what hath been inspired into me; is the blind like him that seeth clearly?" And after says, "I am not your tutor, every thing hath its time, you shall hereafter understand the truth."

This is putting off, and bidding them expect some other after Mahomet. But our Jesus said, He was our tutor and teacher, and that there was none to come after him. Mahomet said he was no angel, but that Jesus was an angel of God. But when God bringeth Jesus into the world, he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him," (Heb. i. 6.) And he made him Lord of all the angels. Mahomet knew not what was past or to come; but our Jesus knew all things, what was in the heart of every man, (John, ii. 24, 25,) which none can do, but God only, (1 Kings, viii. 39,) and foretold things to come to the end of the world. Mahomet had not all the treasures of God; but in Jesus are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," (Col. ii. 3, 9.)

Again, Mahomet never called himself the Messiah, or the Word, or Spirit of God, yet all these appellations he gives to our Jesus.

There were prophecies of Jesus, which we have seen: were there any of Mahomet? None; except of the "false Christs and false Prophets," which Jesus told should come after him, and bid us beware of them, for that they should deceive many.

(4.) *Dc.* But if Mahomet gave thus the preference to Christ in every thing, and said that his Alcoran was only a confirmation of the Gospel; how came he to set it up against the Gospel, and to reckon the Christians among the unbelievers?

Chr. No otherwise than as other heretics did, who called themselves the only true Christians, and invented new interpretations of the Scriptures. The Socinians now charge whole Christianity with apostacy, idolatry, and polytheism: and the Alcoran is but a system of the old Arianism, ill digested and worse put together, with a mixture of some Heathenism and Judaism; for Mahomet's father was a Heathen, his mother a Jewess, and his tutor was Sergius the Monk, a Nestorian; which sect was a branch of Arianism; these crudely mixed made up the farrago of the Alcoran; but the prevailing part was Arianism; and where that spread itself in the east, there Mahometanism succeeded, and sprung out of it, to let all Christians see the horror of that heresy! And our Socinians now among us, who call themselves Unitarians, are much more Mahometans than Christians. For except some personal things as to Mahomet, they agree almost wholly in his doctrine; and as such addressed themselves to the Morocco ambassador here in the reign of King Charles II. as you may see in the Preface to my Dialogues against the Socinians, printed in the year 1708. Nor do they speak more honourably of Christ and the Holy Scriptures than the Alcoran does: and there is no error concerning Christ in the Alcoran but what was broached before by the heretics of Christianity; as that Christ did not suffer really, but in appearance only, or that some other was crucified in his stead, but he taken up into heaven, as the Alcoran speaks.

So that, in strictness, I should not have reckoned Mahometanism as one of the four

religions in the world, but as one of the heresies of Christianity. But because of its great name, and its having spread so far in the world, by the conquests of Mahomet and his followers, and that it is vulgarly understood to be a distinct religion by itself, therefore I have considered it as such.

And as to your concern in the matter, you see plainly, that the Alcoran comes in attestation and confirmation of the facts of Christ, and of the Holy Scriptures.

De. I am not come yet so far as to enter into the disputes of the several sects of Christianity; but as to the fact of Christ and of the Scriptures in general, Mahometanism, I see, does rather confirm than oppose it.

Chr. What then do you think of Judaism, as it now stands in opposition to Christianity?

De. Not only as without any evidence, the time prophesied of for the coming of the Messiah being long since past: but all their former evidences turn directly against them, and against any Messiah who ever hereafter should come. As that the sceptre should not depart from Judah; that he should come into the second temple; that the sacrifices should cease soon after his death; that David should never want a son to sit upon his throne; that they should be many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, &c. which they do not suppose ever will be the case after their Messiah is come. So that they are witnesses against themselves.

Chr. And what do you think of the stories of the Heathen Gods?

De. I believe them no more than all the stories in Ovid's Metamorphoses. Nor did the wiser Heathens believe them, only such silly people as suck in all the Popish legends without examining.

And to tell you the truth, I thought the same of all your stories in the Bible; but I will take time to examine those proofs you have given me.

For we Deists do not dispute against Christianity in behalf of any other religion of the Jews, or Heathens, or Mahometans, all which pretend to revelation; but we are against all revelation; and go only upon bare nature, and what our own reason dictates to us.

(1.) *Chr.* What nature dictates, it dictates to all, at least to the most and the generality of mankind; and if we measure by this, then it will appear a natural notion, that there is necessity of a revelation in religion: and herein you have all the world against you from the very beginning. And will you plead nature against all these?

De. The notion came down from one to another from the beginning, we know not how.

Chr. Then it was either nature from the beginning, or else it was from revelation at the beginning, whence the notion has descended through all posterities to this day.

(2.) And there wants no reason for this: for when man had fallen, and his reason was corrupted, (as we feel it upon us to this day, as sensibly as the diseases and infirmities of the body,) was it not highly reasonable that God should give us a law and directions how to serve and worship him? Sacrifices do not seem to be any natural invention: for why should the taking away the life of my fellow-creature be acceptable to God, or a worship of him? It would rather seem an offence against him. But as types of the great and only propitiatory sacrifice of Christ to come, and to keep up our faith in that, the institution given with the revelation of it appears most rational. And that it was necessary, the great defection shows, not only of the heathens, but of the Jews themselves, who, though they retained the institution, yet, in a great measure, lost the true meaning and signification of it; and are now to be brought back to it by reminding them of the institution and the reason of it.

Plato, (in his Alcibiad. ii. de Precat.) has the same reasoning, and concludes, that we cannot know of ourselves what petitions will be pleasing to God, or what worship to give him: but that it is necessary a lawgiver should be sent from heaven to instruct us; and such a one he did expect; and "O how greatly do I desire to see that man!" says he, and "who he is!" The primitive tradition of the expected Messiah had no doubt come to him, as to many others of the heathens, from the Jews, and likely from the perusal of their Scriptures.

For Plato goes farther, and says, (de Leg. l. 4,) That this lawgiver must be more than man; for he observes, that every nature is governed by another nature that is superior to it, as birds and beasts by man, who is of a distinct and superior nature. So he infers, that this lawgiver, who was to teach man what man could not know by his own nature, must be of a nature that is superior to man, that is, of a divine nature.

Nay, he gives as lively a description of the person, qualifications, life, and death of this divine man, as if he had copied chap. liii. of Isaiah: for he says, (de Repub. l. 2,) That this just person must be poor and void of all recommendations but that of virtue alone; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions and reproof, and therefore, within three or four years after he began to preach, he should be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last put to death; his word is Ἀναχινδυλευθήσεται, that is, cut in pieces, as they cut their sacrifices.

De. These are remarkable passages as you apply them; and Plato was three hundred years before Christ.

But I incline to think that these notions came rather from such tradition as you speak

of, than from nature; and I can see nothing of nature in sacrifices, they look more like institution, come that how it will.

(3.) *Chr.* It is strange that all the nations in the world should be carried away from what you call nature; unless you will take refuge among the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope, hardly distinguishable from beasts, to show us what nature left to itself would do! and leave us all the wise and polite world on the side of revelation, either real or pretended; and of opinion that mankind could not be without it; and my business now with you has been to distinguish the real from the pretended.

(4.) *De.* By the account you have given, there is but one religion in the world, nor ever was: for the Jewish was but Christianity in type, though in time greatly corrupted: and the heathen was a greater corruption, and founded the fables of their gods upon the facts of Scripture: and the Mahometan you say is but a heresy of Christianity. So that all is Christianity still.

Chr. It is true God gave but one revelation to the world, which was that of Christ; and as that was corrupted, new revelations were pretended. But God has guarded his revelations with such evidences, as it was not in the power of men or devils to counterfeit or contrive any thing like them. Some bear resemblance in one or two features, in the first two or three evidences that I have produced; but as none reach the fourth, so they are all quite destitute of the least pretence to the remaining four. So that when you look upon the face of divine revelation, and take it altogether, it is impossible to mistake it for any of those delusions which the devil has set up in imitation of it. And they are made to confirm it, because all the resemblance they have to truth, is that wherein they are any ways like it; but when compared with it, they show, as an ill drawn picture, half man half beast, in presence of the beautiful original.

(5.) *De.* It is strange, that if the case be thus plain as you have made it, the whole world is not immediately convinced.

Chr. If the seed be never so good, yet if it be sown upon stones or among thorns, it will bring forth nothing. There are hearts of stone, and others so filled with the love of riches, with the cares and pleasures of this life, that they will not see; they have not a mind to know any thing which they think would disturb them in their enjoyments, or lessen their opinion of them, for that would be taking away so much of their pleasure; therefore it is no easy matter to persuade men to place their happiness in future expectations, which is the import of the Gospel. And in pressing this, and bidding the worldly-minded abandon their beloved vices, and telling the fatal consequences of them, we must expect to meet not only with their scorn and contempt, but their utmost rage and impatience, to get rid of us, as so many enemies of their lusts and pleasures. This is the cross which our Saviour prepared all his disciples to bear, who were to fight against flesh and blood, and all the allurements of the world; and it is a greater miracle that they have had so many followers in this, than that they have gained to themselves so many enemies. The world is a strong man, and till a stronger than he come, (that is, the full persuasion of the future state,) he will keep possession. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. But we are told also that this faith is the gift of God; for all the evidence in the world will not reach the heart, unless it be prepared (like the good ground) to receive the doctrine that is taught. Till then prejudice will create obstinacy, which will harden the heart like a rock, and cry, *Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris!* "I will not be persuaded, though I should be persuaded!"

You must consider under this head, too, the many that have not yet heard of the Gospel; and of those that have, the far greater number who have not the capacity or opportunity to examine all the evidences of Christianity, but take things upon trust, just as they are taught. And how many others are careless, and will not be at the pains, though they want not capacity to inquire into the truth? All these classes will include the greatest part of mankind,—the ignorant, the careless, the vicious, and so the obstinate, the ambitious, and the covetous, whose minds the god of this world hath blinded.

But yet, in the midst of all this darkness, God hath not left himself without witness, which will be apparent to every diligent and sober inquirer that is willing and prepared to receive the truth.

(6.) Good sir, let me ask you, though you are of no religion, as you say, but what you call natural, yet would you not think me very brutal, if I should deny that ever there was such a man as Alexander, or Cæsar, or that they did such things?—if I should deny all history, or that Homer, or Virgil, Demosthenes, or Cicero, ever wrote such books?—would you not think me perfectly obstinate, seized with a spirit of contradiction, and not fit for human conversation?

And yet these things are of no consequence to me, it is not a farthing as to my interest, whether they are true or false.

Will you then think yourself a reasonable man, if, in matters of the greatest importance, even your eternal state, you will not believe those facts which have a thousand times more certain and indisputable evidence? Were there any prophecies of Cæsar or Pompey?

Were there any types of them, or public institutions appointed by a law, to prefigure the great things that they should do? Any persons who went before them, to bear a resemblance of these things, and bid us expect that great event? Was there a general expectation in the world of their coming, before or at the time when they came? And of what consequence was their coming to the world, or to after ages? No more than a robbery committed a thousand years ago!

Were the Greek and Roman histories wrote by the persons who did the facts, or by eye-witnesses? And for the greater certainty were those histories made the standing law of the country? Or were they any more than our Holinshead and Stow, &c.

Must we believe these, on pain of not being thought reasonable men? And are we then unreasonable and credulous, if we believe the facts of the Holy Bible? which was the standing law of the people to whom it was given, and wrote or dictated by those who did the facts, with public institutions appointed by them as a perpetual law to all their generations; and which, if the facts had been false, could never have passed at the time when the facts were said to be done; nor, for the same reason, if that book had been wrote afterwards; because these institutions (as circumcision, the passover, baptism, &c.) were as notorious facts as any; and that book, saying they commenced from the time that the facts were done, must be found to be false, whenever it was trumped up in after ages, by no such institutions being then known. Not like the feasts, games, &c. in memory of the heathen gods, which were appointed long after those facts were said to be done; and the like institutions may be appointed to-morrow in memory of any falsehood said to be done a thousand years ago; and so is no proof at all. And though a legend, or book of stories of things said to be done many years past, may be palmed upon people, yet a book of statutes cannot, by which their causes are tried every day.

Are there such prophecies extant in any profane history so long before the facts there recorded, as there are in the Holy Scriptures of the coming of the Messiah?

Were there any types or forerunners of the heathen Gods or Mahomet?

Is there the like evidence of the truth and sincerity of the Greek and Roman historians, as of the penmen of the Holy Scriptures?

Would these historians have given their lives for the truth of all they wrote?

Did they tell such facts only, wherein it was impossible for themselves to be imposed upon, or that they should impose upon others? Nothing but what themselves had seen and heard, and they also to whom they spoke?

Did they expect nothing but persecution and death for what they related? And were they bidden to bear it patiently without resistance? Was this the case of the disciples of Mahomet, who were required to fight and conquer with the sword?

Did any religion ever overcome by suffering, but the Christian only?

And did any exhibit the future state, and preach the contempt of this world, like the Christian?

De. That is the reason it has prevailed so little. And yet, considering this, it is strange it has prevailed so much.

(7.) But there is one thing yet behind, wherein I would be glad to have your opinion, because I find your divines differ about it; and that is, how we shall know to distinguish betwixt true and false miracles.

And this is necessary to the subject we are upon; for the force of the facts you allege ends all in this, that such miraculous facts are a sufficient attestation of such persons being sent of God; and consequently, that we are to believe the doctrine which they taught.

You know we Deists deny any such thing as miracles, but reduce all to nature; yet I confess, if I had seen such miracles as are recorded of Moses and of Christ, it would have convinced me. And for the truth of them we must refer to the evidences you have given. But in the meantime, if there is no rule whereby to distinguish betwixt true and false miracles, there is an end of all the pains you have taken. For if the devil can work such things as appear miracles to me, I am as much persuaded as if they were true miracles, and wrought by God. And so men may be deceived in trusting to miracles.

The common notion of a miracle is what exceeds the power of nature. To which we say, that we know not the utmost of the power of nature, and consequently cannot tell what exceeds it. Nor do you pretend to know the utmost of the power of spirits, whether good or evil, and how then can you tell what exceeds their power?

I doubt not but you would have thought those to be true miracles which the magicians are said to have wrought in Egypt, but that Moses is said to have wrought miracles that were superior to them.

Chr. Therefore, if two powers contend for the superiority, as here God and the Devil did, the best issue can be is to see them wrestle together, and then we shall soon know which is the strongest. This was the case of Moses and the magicians, of Christ and the Devil. There was a struggle, and Satan was plainly overcome.

I confess I know not the power of spirits, nor how they work upon bodies. And by the same reason that a spirit can lift a straw, he may a mountain, and the whole earth, for

aught I know, and may do many things which would appear true miracles to me, and so might deceive me. And all I have to trust to in this case, is the restraining power of God, that he will not permit the devil so to do. And were it not for this, I doubt not but the devil could take away my life in an instant, or inflict terrible diseases upon me, as upon Job.

And I think this consideration is the strongest motive in the world to keep us in a constant dependence upon God, that we may live in the midst of such powerful enemies as we can by no means resist of ourselves, and are in their power every minute, when God shall withdraw his protection from us.

And it is in their power likewise to work signs and wonders to deceive us, if God permit. And herein the great power and goodness of God is manifest, that he has never yet permitted the devil to work miracles in opposition to any whom he sent, except where the remedy was at hand, and to show his power the more, as in the case of Moses and the magicians, &c.

And this is farther evident, because God has, at other times, and upon other occasions, suffered the devil to exert his power,—as to make fire descend upon Job's cattle, &c. But here was no cause of religion concerned, nor any truth of God in debate.

De. But your Christ has foretold, (Matt. xxiv. 24,) that false Christs and false prophets shall arise, who shall show great signs and wonders, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. And it is said, (2 Thess. ii. 9,) that there shall be a wicked one, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders ; and it is supposed, (Deut. xiii. 1, &c.) that a false prophet may give a sign or a wonder, to draw men after false gods. Here, then, is sign against sign, and wonder against wonder, and which of these shall we believe ?

Chr. The first, no doubt. For God cannot contradict himself, nor will show signs and wonders in opposition to that Law which he has established by so many signs and wonders. Therefore, in such a case, we must conclude, that God has permitted the Devil to exert his power, as against Moses and Christ, for the trial of our faith, and to show the superior power of God more eminently, in overcoming all the power of the enemy.

But, as I said before, we have a more sure word, that is, proof, than even these miracles exhibited to our outward senses, which is the word of prophecy. Let, then, any false Christ who shall pretend to come hereafter, show such a book as our Bible, which has been so long in the world (the most ancient book now extant) testifying of him, foretelling the time, and all other circumstances of his coming, with his sufferings and death, and all these prophecies exactly fulfilled in him. And till he can do this, he cannot have that evidence which our Christ has, and he must be a false Christ to me, and all the signs that he can show, will be but lying wonders to any that is truly established in the Christian faith.

But it may be a trial too strong for those careless ones who will not be at the pains to inquire into the grounds of their religion, but take it upon trust, as they do the fashions, and mind not to frame their lives according to it, but are immersed in the world, and the pleasures of it.

(8.) And it will be a just judgment upon these, that they who shut their eyes against all the clear evidences of the Gospel, should be given up to believe a lie. And the reason is given (2 Thess. ii. 12,) because they " had pleasure in unrighteousness." They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

So that I must repeat what I said before, that there is a preparation of the heart (as of the ground) to receive the truth. And where the doctrine does not please, no evidence, how clear soever, will be received. God cannot enter, till Mammon be dispossessed. We cannot serve these two masters. He who has a clear sight of heaven, cannot value the dull pleasures of this life ; and it is impossible that he who is drowned in sense can relish spiritual things. The love of this world is enmity against God. The first sin was a temptation of sense ; and the reparation is to open our eyes to the enjoyment of God. Vice clouds this eye, and makes it blind to the only true and eternal pleasure. It is foolishness to such a one.

This, this, Sir, is the *remora* that keeps men from Christianity. It is not want of evidence, but it is want of consideration. I would not say this to you till I had first gone through all the topics of reason with you, that you might not call it cant. But this is the truth. As David says, " To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God." And our Saviour says, " If any man do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." And " No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him."

This was the reason why Saint John the Baptist was sent as a forerunner to prepare the way for Christ, by preaching of repentance, to fit men for receiving the Gospel.

And they who repented of their sins upon his preaching, did gladly embrace the doctrine of Christ. But they who would not forsake their sins remained obdurate, though otherwise men of sense and learning. As our Saviour told the priests and elders, (Matt. xxi. 32.) " John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not ; but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye,

when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him."

And when Christ sought to prepare them for his doctrine, by telling them that they could not serve God and Mammon, it is said, (Luke, xvi. 14,) "That when the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard these things, they derided him." But he instructed them in the next verse, (if they would have received it) that "what is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God." And enforced this with the example of the rich man and Lazarus. And said, (Luke, xviii. 25,) "That it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And (xiv. 33,) that "whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Now take this in the largest sense, that he who is not ready and willing to forsake all, as if he hated them, as Christ said, (verse 26,) "If any man come unto me and hate not his father and mother," &c. (that is, when they come in competition with any command of Christ) and "take not his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple." How few disciples would he have had in this age! Would all his miracles persuade some to this! The world is too hard for heaven with most men!

Here is the cause of infidelity. The love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, darken the heart, and, like shutters, keep out the light of heaven. Till they are removed, the light cannot enter; the spirit of purity and holiness will not descend into an heart full of all uncleanness. If we would invite this guest, we must sweep the house and make it clean.

But this, too, is of God; for he only can make a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. But he has promised to give this wisdom to those who ask it, and lead a godly life. Therefore ask, and you shall have; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. But do it ardently and incessantly, as he that striveth for his soul. For God is gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and of great goodness: and those who come to him in sincerity, he will in no wise cast out. Therefore pray in faith, nothing doubting; and what you pray for, according to his will, believe that you receive it, and you shall receive it.

To his grace I commend you.

(9.) And with the fulness of the Gentiles, oh! that it would please God to take the veil off the heart of the Jews, and let them see that they have been deceived by many false Messiahs since Christ came; so none whom they expect hereafter, can answer the prophecies of the Messiah (some of which I have named) and therefore no such can be the Messiah who is prophesied of in their own Scriptures.

And let them see and consider how that fatal curse they imprecated upon themselves, "His blood be upon us and on our children," has cleaved unto them, beyond all their former sins, and even repeated idolatry, from which (to show that is not the cause of their present dispersion) they have kept themselves free ever since; and for which their longest captivity was but seventy years, and then prophets were sent to them to comfort them, and assure them of a restoration: but now they have been about seventeen hundred years dispersed over all the earth, without any prophet or prospect of their deliverance; that the whole world might take notice of this before unparalleled judgment, not known to any nation that ever yet was upon the face of the earth? So punished, and so preserved for judgment, and I hope, at last, for a more wonderful mercy! "For, if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

THE END.

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4

A

SHORT AND EASY METHOD

WITH

THE JEWS.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES LESLIE, M.A

EDINBURGH:
Printed by ANDREW SHORTREDE, Thistle Lane.

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A

SHORT AND EASY METHOD

WITH

THE JEWS.

I. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. I addressed a former discourse against the Deists, equal enemies to you and us, who deny all instituted and revealed religion; and I have justified the truth of yours, while I have asserted that of the Christian religion. They both stand upon one bottom. They only, of all the revelations that ever were pretended in the world, can shew the four marks mentioned in the Method with the Deists; which do infallibly demonstrate the truth of any matter of fact where they all do meet. And the consequence is as plain, that if the revelation of Moses be true, that of Christ must be true also. And you can never demonstrate the truth of the matters of fact of Moses by any arguments or evidences, which will not as strongly evince the truth of the matters of fact of Christ: and, on the other hand, you cannot overthrow the matters of fact of Christ, but you must, by the same means, destroy those of Moses. So that, I hope, you are involved under the happy necessity, either to renounce Moses, or to embrace Christ.

But if you will allow (as some of you have done) that the matters of fact of our Lord Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, are true, but will contend that this does not infer the truth of his doctrine, because, as may be alleged, those seeming miracles which he wrote were done by magic: then I beseech you, how will you rescue the miracles of Moses from the same objection? The comparison, in this case, must lie betwixt the miracles of Moses and of Christ. And I believe you will not deny, but that those recorded in the Gospel are full as great as those in Exodus.

II. If the Deists think to come in here betwixt us, and conclude both to be false miracles, at least that we cannot be sure they are true miracles, because, as they philosophize, we do not know the utmost extent of the power of nature, and consequently cannot know what exceeds it.

Ans. 1. This is an objection, not against the miracles recorded of Moses or of Christ, but against all miracles; and putting it out of God's power to shew any miracle that ought to be believed of man: which is a contradiction to the principles of the Deists themselves, who allow an eternal Being of infinite power, and yet, by this, would put it out of his power to make any external revelation to men.

2. But, in the next place, their philosophy is not good. For though we could not know the utmost stretch of what nature can do, yet it will not follow, that we cannot know what is contrary to nature, in those works of nature which we do know. For example, though I cannot tell all the whole nature of fire, and all its operations, yet this I certainly know, that it is of the nature of fire to burn; and therefore, if proper fuel be administered unto it, it is contrary to the nature of fire not to consume it. Thus, when Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, were thrown into the burning fiery furnace, if that matter of fact be true, in all its circumstances, as it is related in the third chapter of Daniel, we can be sure that there was a stop there put to the natural power of the fire, which is a miracle. We can be as sure of it as of any thing we either see or hear. So that the same scepticism which these men advance against miracles, will, as much, take away the certainty of our outward senses; which is the only postulatum they would have taken as undoubted, and to which they reduce all the certainty of which mankind is capable; giving to themselves, by their great sense, little pre-eminence above the condition of brutes, to which they would degrade all the rest of the world with themselves. And some of them have shewn their parts in witty satires upon this subject. But let us leave them with the company they have chosen, and return.

As sure as we can be that it is the nature of fire to burn, (though we may not know every thing else it can do,) so sure we can be, that

it exceeds the power of nature to raise the dead by the speaking of a word, to cure the lame, blind, &c. by the same means, or the touch of one's finger, without any other application.

III. Now, then, the miracles recorded of Christ, being as great as those recorded of Moses, and carrying along with them the same evidences of their truth, deduced down from that time to this, what reason can be given for the believing of the one, and yet rejecting of the other? There can be none, my friends, only there are some prejudices under which you labour, that stop your way towards receiving of the truth, which you cannot deny: as conceiving it inconsistent with your interpretation of some texts in your law.

But ought you not rather to suspect your own interpretations (especially where the words will favourably bear another) than to reject such an evidence as must undermine your law itself, and destroy its infallible certainty, by disowning the same, in the only case that carries the same demonstration along with it? God cannot contradict himself; and therefore would never have set his own seal (which it is not possible to counterfeit,) to the truth of the Gospel, if it did, in the least iota, contradict or destroy the law. Therefore it behoves you well to consider, whether those things that you take for contradictions are such. In order to which,

1. Consider the difference betwixt destroying and fulfilling. The fulfilling of a prophecy, is not its destruction, but completion. So of all types, or shadows, which point at things to come, when the substance is come, the shadow ceases of course.

Now, if the Messiah was prophesied of, and typified in the law, then his coming will indeed put an end to these, but not by way of destroying, which would be contradicting, but of fulfilling them, which is confirming, and attesting to the truth of them. And I suppose you are not ignorant that our Messiah did not pretend to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. And did most strongly assert and confirm it to the least iota, (Matt. v. 17—19; Luke, xvi. 17.) And did fulfil it, in every circumstance, even to his suffering without the gate, to answer the burning of the body of the expiatory sacrifice without the camp, &c. (Heb. xiii. 12; Lev. xvi. 27.) That, as himself said, "all things might be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning him," (Luke, xxiv. 44.) Some of which are repeated hereafter, Sect. XII.

2. But I will carry this argument farther. That not only there is no contradiction to the law in the Gospel, but that the law cannot be true, unless you allow the truth of the Gospel. For no other way possible is there to reconcile the promises made in the law but as they are fulfilled in the Gospel, of which let me give some few instances, out of many.

1. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people, or nations, be," (Gen. xlix. 10.)

This the Chaldee and ancient Jewish interpreters do understand of the Messiah.

And the sceptre being long since departed from Judah, and no other Messiah come, but our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the gathering of the nations or Gentiles has been; the Rabbies of the Jews, since his coming, have strained their wits to invent salvoes and evasions for this prophecy. Some of them say, that by Shiloh here was not meant the Messiah, but Moses. Others say, it was the tabernacle at Shiloh. But others, thinking these interpretations not tenable, and that it cannot be denied to be meant of the Messiah, have fenced about the word sceptre, which they contend to be a rod, not of rule, but of correction, which should not depart from Judah till Shiloh or the Messiah should come. Others, not liking this, allow it to be a sceptre of government, but then turn it this way, namely, that the sceptre should not finally or for ever depart from Judah, because the Messiah should come, that is, to restore it. But this being an altering, instead of expounding the text, others, seeing there could not be any tolerable evasion made from the words of the text, have boldly adventured upon a new way of satisfying it, namely, that the sceptre or dominion is not yet departed, that is, not totally, for that some of them have somewhere or other some share or other of government or jurisdiction, more or less; at least some that have, one way or other, descended from the tribe of Judah, though it may not be known.

I will not take up time to examine or disprove these pretences. They carry guilt in their face. And being all contradictory to one another, shew to what a confusion the Jews are brought, in forcing their way through the plain predictions of the Messiah, of which I will go on to more instances.

2. "Thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. Neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.—Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne, and with the Levites the priests, my ministers," (Jer. xxxiii. 17, 18, 20, 21.) Now is all this

gloriously fulfilled in our Messiah, the Son of David, who is made Lord of heaven and earth, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. But without this, how is this prophecy fulfilled? What Son of David can you produce, who now reigns over the house of Israel? And as for the covenant with Levi, that is as much broken, for instead of sacrifices continually, you have not now, nor have had since the destruction of Jerusalem, above sixteen hundred years, any sacrifice at all. But if you understand these prophecies as of the kingdom of the Messiah, so of his priesthood, of which that of Levi was a type, and fulfilled in it, then is this prophecy exactly accomplished in the evangelical priesthood which our Messiah has instituted, and which, we doubt not, will, according to the utmost extent of this prophecy of it, last as long as the covenant of day and night, that is, as our Messiah has again given us his assurance, "even unto the end of the world," and that the gates of hell shall never be able to "prevail against it," (Matt. xxviii. 20; xvi. 18.) Some of the Jews pretend, that David will be raised from the dead, and made immortal, to fulfil this prophecy, (Limborch, Collat. p. 73.) But others, rejecting this interpretation, say, that this is to be meant of the time after the Messiah; so that, after the Messiah shall come of the seed of David, there shall no more want of his seed, to rule, &c. But the words of the text are, that "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." And putting to this, "after the coming of the Messiah," is adding to the text. And the like liberty would leave nothing certain, in any text of the Bible, or in any other writing. The next I produce is,

3. That most exact description (Isaiah, liii.) of the death and sufferings of the Messiah, with the reason of it, namely, as an expiation and satisfaction for the sins of the people.

And how forced and foreign is that interpretation which some of your modern Jews have put upon this chapter, on purpose to avoid the plain proof of our Messiah therein? As if the person there spoke of, were not any particular person, but only a description of the people of the Jews in the name of a person; of their present dispersion through all nations; with the contempt and misery which they suffer; and withal their making many proselytes to their religion in this their dispersion.

For their many proselytes, we hear not of them. If the Jews keep their own ground, it is the most that, in your present circumstances, you seem to expect; and would be well content to compound for it, not only here, but in all the countries whither you are dispersed. What king, what nation have you converted? nay, in our part of the world, what family, what persons? And we hear as little of it from other parts. You boast of many in Spain and Portugal; but they conceal it, and we know them not. But the flowing in of the Gentiles has been to the Christian Church; and only so can the promise of it to your Church be verified, that is, as yours was a type of ours, or as ours is truly yours, fulfilled and continued, in the reign of your Messiah, pursuant to all the prophecies which went before of him. Therefore, by all that has yet appeared of your dispersion, it is as a just punishment for your own sins, and not for the conversion of the Gentiles. But how for their conversion? when your learned Jew confesses (as hereafter quoted) that you have no arguments against the Gentiles, nor can convince any of them. And in all the prophecies of this your dispersion, (some of which are recited, Sect. XI.) there is nothing told of the conversion of the Gentiles as thereby designed, but only as a punishment of your iniquity, and, at the length, for your conversion, as well as that of the Gentiles. As that God will have mercy upon you, and cause your captivity to return, (Jer. xxxiii. 26.) That the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and turn away iniquity from Jacob, (Isaiah, i. lix. 20.) And in the meantime, that you should be rejected for your wickedness, and another people chosen in your place. For thus it is said to you, (Isaiah, lxv. 11—15,) "But ye are they that forsake the Lord. Therefore will I number you to the sword. Because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear," (ye did not hearken to the words of the Lord, in the mouth of that prophet, whom he told you, Deut. xviii. 18, 19, he would send) "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name." How literally is this fulfilled! God hath chosen the Christians in your place, and called his servants by another name: not that you should be finally rejected, but till the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in; and then shall you be converted by them, and not they by you. Therefore are you fatally deluded, who attribute to yourselves, and to your present circumstances, all that righteousness which is spoken of the Messiah in the fifty-third of Isaiah: as, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," &c. Was it for this end that God foretold your dispersion? No, but for your grievous iniquities, and for your own conversion. As said by a prophet of your

own, (Ezek. vi. 8, 9, 10,) "Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries: And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations — Because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me — And they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations: And they shall know that I am the Lord, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them." Again, (xii. 15, 16,) "They shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries: But I will leave a few men of them—that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I am the Lord;" that is, you Jews shall know. It is to convince and convert you that you shall be so dispersed as you are this day. Again, (Amos, ix. 7, 8, 9,) "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord.—Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord: For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth."

You shall be preserved, in your dispersion, in order to your repentance, not for your holiness to convert the nations, for you are called the sinful kingdom, and as children of the Ethiopians. And God will choose other hands to raise his kingdom among the heathen; as it follows, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this," (Amos, ix. 11, 12.) See that fulfilled this day. Where are the heathen that are called by the name of the Lord? Who does possess them, but our Messiah, the Son of David, by whose name they are called Christians? In vain, therefore, do you expect the heathen to be converted by you. You see it done already by those whom God has chosen in your room, and who now seek to convert you, by persuading of you to hearken to Moses and your own prophets; who have told you of this conversion of the Gentiles, while you remain in your obstinacy, "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not; I said, Behold me, behold me unto a nation that was not called by my name," (Isa. lxv. 1.) But unto Israel he saith, (ver. 2.) "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious and gain-saying people." Yet you would attribute great holiness to yourselves in this your dispersion, even all that which is spoken of the Messiah in the fifty-third of Isaiah.

I have insisted thus long upon it, because this is all you have to say against that wonderful prophecy of the low outward appearance of the Messiah when he should come; and of the end of his coming, not fighting (as you expect) but suffering; not conquering men with the sword, but, as it is there expressed, (Isa. lxv. 10,) "giving up his soul an offering for sin," whereby to redeem us from that death denounced against sin, (Gen. ii. 17;) and so conquering him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; to whom we were in bondage, lying under the curse, of which he was made the executioner.

And this (till the time should come) was shadowed out to us in several types and representations of it, not only in your law, which was but one of them; for sacrifices (the most express type of the death and sacrifice of the Messiah) were instituted upon the first sin of man, and the promise of the Messiah then given, and his conquest of the serpent, (Gen. iii. 15;) and were practised by Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, &c. before the law; but most lively expressed in the sacrifice of Isaac, upon which the promise of the Messiah was again renewed to Abraham, (Gen. xxii. 18.) This salvation by the Messiah was likewise prefigured by the saving of Noah and his family in the ark; as by your passage through the Red Sea, and deliverance out of Egypt; particularly by the erection of the brazen serpent, as of Christ upon the cross; and your salvation only by looking upon that, as ours by faith in him. But these types may be over-valued, when we rest in them, without looking forward to what they represent. Therefore Hezekiah broke that brazen serpent to pieces, and called it Nehushtan, (2 Kings, xviii. 4,) a contemptible name, that is, only a bit of brass. And God expresses himself with as much indignation against your sacrifices, as insufficient of themselves to reconcile to him. In which sense, he declares, (Isaiah, i. 11—15,) that he hates them, that they are a trouble and an abomination to him, and that he is weary to bear them; and that he will not accept of them, nor has required them as a satisfaction for sin. What is it then that he will accept? Even the Messiah, for whom a body was prepared, (Psal. xl. 6, 7,) in which he was to make that atonement which the bodies of beasts could not; and which is very particularly described in the fifty-third of Isaiah; and cannot be applied to the Jewish nation (as they would now turn it) under their present sufferings and calamity. It is said (ver. 12,) "He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Do the Jews make intercession for the Gentiles? or how do they bear their sins? It is said, (ver. 9,) "He had done no violence, neither

was any deceit in his mouth; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him," &c. But what is before recited out of your prophets, and much more could be added to the same purpose, shew plainly, that you have been bruised for your own great wickednesses. And the opinion of your own righteousness is not the least part of your delusion. But you oppose yourselves, and set up contrary pretences; for when you come to give an account why your Messiah has delayed his coming so long beyond the time which was limited by the prophets, you have no other answer, but that it is because of your sins. And they must be sins more than ordinary, which have provoked God to break his promises, so oft repeated, concerning the time of the Messiah's coming. So that here you make yourselves the greatest sinners that can be; but in answer to Isaiah, liii. then you are righteous altogether, and there is no deceit in your mouth; your nation is the "Righteous servant of the Lord," there spoke of!

But of that servant it is said, (ver. 8,) "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." Therefore he was not that people, but he suffered for that people.

The learned Jew says, (Limbor. Coll. p. 53) That the death which the Christians would infer of the Messiah from this of Isaiah, liii. means not a real death (for they suppose rightly, but misunderstood, that their Messiah will live for ever,) but only *labores et flagella* (as he words it,) great labours and afflictions, which they suppose he may endure *ante perfectam regni revelationem*, before the full establishment of his kingdom. And he brings, as a parallel place, (2 Cor. xi. 23,) "In deaths oft," which the apostle speaks of himself, but it means no more than dangers.

Ans. 1. The Messiah's undergoing stripes and afflictions, though in order to his kingdom, is as adverse to the Jews' notion of the Messiah, as death itself. For they suppose him to go on gloriously in conquests and victory, and not to be scourged, or ignominiously treated.

Ans. 2. Being in deaths, shews itself to be a figurative expression: for a man can be in death but once, therefore not, in that sense, often in deaths. But as a man in battles, or storms at sea, may be said to be often in deaths, so the apostle in the many dangers which he there repeats. But far otherwise are the expressions concerning the death of the Messiah: (Isaiah, liii. 8, 9, 12,) "He was cut off out of the land of the living. He made his grave with the wicked. He poured out his soul unto death." And, "Messiah the prince shall be cut off, but not for himself," &c. (Dan. ix. 25, 26.) If these expressions do not signify death, what others can? And the Jews struggling against it, shews only that they are resolved not to be convinced by any words whatsoever that can be spoken. They try all ways, but dare stick to none. For they are contradictory to one another, and if one of their excuses hold, the rest must be false; which confusion, of itself, were enough to convince them. You shall see more of them.

To avoid this, and other prophecies which speak expressly of the poor and low state in which the Messiah was to appear, "Behold thy king cometh unto thee poor," or as we translate it "lowly," &c. (Zech. ix. 9,) the modern Jews have framed to themselves two Messiahs — one, Ben Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim, who was to be poor and contemptible, and undergo great indignities, — the other, Ben David, of the tribe of Judah, who was to be victorious, and conquer all the earth before them, and to live for ever in temporal grandeur; that he was to raise again from the dead all the Israelites of former ages, and among them the first Messiah, Ben Joseph. Thus the Jews, shutting fast their eyes, do dream, and invent Messiahs on purpose, because they will not be concluded by the plain prophecies of the one and only Messiah. Where do the prophets speak of two Messiahs? But speaking all along of one and of the Son or Messiah, does necessarily exclude any other. If there were two, one would not be the Messiah. And by the same rule they make two, they may make two score of Messiahs. But this shameless contrivance shews how hard they are put to it to elude the plain prophecies of the Messiah, and is a confirmation of the true import and meaning of these prophecies, which are not answerable but by such poor and guilty shifts. It is for this reason that I have been so long upon this prophecy of Isaiah; and shewn the dream of your modern Rabbies, of two Messiahs, unknown to all your expositors before Christ came, but invented since, on purpose to avoid the plain and undoubted characters which our Jesus bore of the Messiah.

4. The famous prophecy of Daniel's seventy weeks, (Dan. ix. 24, &c.) which, according to the prophetical computation of a year for a day, makes four hundred and ninety years. In which time it was then foretold that the Messiah should come; and our Messiah did come within that time. And all there spoken of him were punctually fulfilled: as, that the Messiah should be cut off; and soon after, that the city of Jerusalem, and the sanctuary should be destroyed; and the sacrifice and oblation should cease; and that even after all this, desolations were determined against your nation.

And the end of the Messiah's coming is likewise there told, not temporal conquests, as you dream of, but, "To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness."

This prophecy pinches so close, that the modern Jews, to avoid it, would endeavour to discredit the whole book of Daniel: They dare not quite throw it off, because it was indubitably received by their forefathers before Christ came. And the high rank in which Daniel is put, (Ezek. xiv. 14, 20,) rather gives him the preference before all the rest of the prophets, than excludes him out of their number. It makes him, at least, the most highly favoured of God, of all the men living in the world in his time. And his visions of the four great empires of the world, and prophecies of the state-revolutions which followed so remarkably, made his prophecies more noted than those of any of the other prophets. And God sets him forth as the standard of wisdom amongst men, (Ezek. xxviii. 3.) For these reasons, the Jews after Christ could not expunge this book of Daniel. But about a hundred years after Christ, they quite inverted the method of the books of the Old Testament, which to that time had been received amongst them, and made a new distribution of them; and a distinction of those they called Ἁγιόγραφα, or "Holy Writings;" but put them in a class below the inspired and canonical Scriptures. And into this lower class they thrust the book of Daniel, at the end of the prophets, which before was placed in the middle of them.

But this book of Daniel, if it be not among those which are inspired in the highest degree, it cannot stand among any holy or good writings, but it must be reckoned false and blasphemous, because it speaks of itself all along as immediately inspired by God: and if those visions and revelations there related be not true, then it is telling of lies, in the name of the Lord, which is high blasphemy.

Therefore, since the modern Jews dare not place the book of Daniel lower than among the holy or pious writings, they confess it to be inspired and canonical, and have only discovered their own guilt in seeking to avoid the witness of their own prophets to our Messiah.

5. That promise concerning the temple of Solomon, (2 Chron. vii. 16,) that God's name should be there for ever, and perpetually, cannot be verified but as it was a type of the Christian Church, which shall last for ever. For types, as pictures, are often called by the name of what they represent, and by them is meant that whereof they are the types.

6. As that promise to the temple of Solomon, so neither can that made to the second temple, be otherwise verified than as fulfilled in our Messiah,—that "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former," (Hag. ii. 3, 7, 9.) And yet it was as nothing in comparison of the former. How then should the glory be greater? It is told, because "the Desire of all nations" should come into it, and "In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts." Here was given the eternal peace and reconciliation of God with men, in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom God was, by his means, reconciling the world unto himself, (2 Cor. v. 19.)

Some Jews, to avoid the force of this prophecy, do now pretend, that, by "the latter house," (Hag. ii. 9,) is not to be meant that second temple, but some other yet to be built. This is very precarious, and a guilty plea. But it will not bear; for it is plain, that it was of that very second temple which the prophet spoke. The comparison (ver. 3,) is betwixt that temple which they then saw, and the first temple of Solomon. And (ver. 7,) God, speaking of that temple then built, says, "I will fill this house with glory." And (ver. 9,) "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former." If it were spoken of a third or a fourth temple, the word "former" would not relate to the first temple. And there was no other "former," when this prophecy was given forth. It was the second temple that seemed as nothing, in the eyes of those who had seen the first, who therefore wept, (Ezra, iii. 12.) And, to comfort these, it was here promised, that the glory of that second house should exceed that of the former.

But there were other glories, much greater than that of the building, which the first temple had, and the second had none of them; as your own Rabbies [1] do reckon them under five heads:—1. The holy ark, wherein were the tables of the covenant, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded; and where God was said to dwell, between the cherubims that covered it, (Psal. lxxx. 1.) 2. The Schechina, or divine presence in the cloud of glory. 3. The miraculous Urim and Thummim. 4. The holy fire that came down from heaven. 5. The gift of prophecy, or of the Holy Ghost. These all ceased under the second temple; which made its glory much more inferior to that of the first, than the difference as to the magnificence of the building. But all these glories were much exceeded under the second temple; they were fulfilled, and more divinely exhibited in their archetype the Messiah; who was the true Schechina, God not only appearing in, but personally united to our nature; whose Holy Spirit descended miraculously in fire upon his apostles, the same day (of Pentecost) wherein the law was given in fire from Mount Sinai; and filled them with the gifts of tongues, of miracles, and of prophecy, which were now departed from the temple; and placed that infallible Urim and Thummim in their hearts, which was but faintly represented in the breastplate of your high priest.

7. Again, of this second temple it was said,

[1] R. Kimchi and R. Solom. in Hag. i. 8. and R. Bechai in Legem. f. 59.

(Mal. iii. 1.) "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts." Therefore it was necessary that the Messiah should come during the standing of the second temple; and that prophecy can never now be fulfilled.

You have several times attempted to rebuild your temple, in the reigns of Adrian, of Constantine, of Julian, when having gained not only that apostate emperor's consent, but that he was willing to bear the expenses of it; and gave orders for the rebuilding of your temple at Jerusalem, in odium to the Christians; and the heathens did with great zeal (for the same reason) assist you in it: even then, when you seemed on all hands to have gained your purpose, behold, God did immediately himself interpose, and by a terrible earthquake threw up the stones out of the very foundation with that violence, as destroyed many of the workmen and spectators; and by overthrowing the building near adjoining to the temple, killed and maimed many more of the Jews, who were there gathered together, for the carrying on of this work.

And when, not terrified with this, they again attempted to lay the foundations of the temple, globes of fire bursting out of the very foundations, not only destroyed the workmen, but devoured the stones. This is recorded in Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 20, and in Sozom. l. 5. c. 22, who appeals to several witnesses of it, then living. And our Chrysostom says, (Orat. 2. contr. Jud.) "We all are witnesses of this thing." But besides these testimonies of Christians, this is likewise told by Ammianus Marcellinus, who was not a Christian, in his twenty-third book. Thus the building of the temple was defeated at that time, A. C. 361, and to this day; though, if you had a new temple to-morrow, that could not solve the prophecies that were made either to the first or second temple, which last has been destroyed now more than sixteen hundred years; much less could it satisfy all those prophecies that speak so particularly of the time of the Messiah's coming, which are longer since past.

IV. The prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the time of the coming of the Messiah, were so noted and known among the Jews, that when it drew near, namely, about the time that our blessed Saviour came into the world, the Jews were generally looking out for him, and expected his coming. Some thought that Herod (who repaired the temple, and made it more glorious) was he, and took the name of Herodians. Others followed Theudas; others Judas of Galilee.

Both of which are mentioned in our history of the Acts of the Apostles, (v. 36, 37;) and likewise by your Josephus, (Antiq. l. xxviii. c. 1, 2. l. xx. c. 2.) If it was not another Theudas, who, as he tells, pretended to miracles, namely, to divide the river Jordan by his command, and give his followers passage through it on dry land. He mentions another impostor, (ibid. c. 7.) who led the Jews into the wilderness, and promised them deliverance, if they would follow him thither: whom Festus destroyed, with all his followers. This our Saviour literally foretold, (Mat. xxiii. 23—26.) and cautions against following these false Christs and false prophets into the desert. And Josephus says, (Antiq. l. xx. c. vi.) that there were at that time (which was about fifty-seven or fifty-eight years after the nativity of Christ) many enchanters and deceivers, who persuaded the common people to follow them into the desert, where they promised to work miracles, &c. He says, that the country of Judea was stored with such: so intent were they then to find out their Messiah, and so persuaded that that was the time of his coming. The two brothers Asinæus and Anileus, (Antiq. l. xviii. c. 12,) both weavers, had mighty successes, but were at last destroyed, and were the occasion of the destruction of many of the Jews, who followed them, about forty years after the birth of Christ. And about seventy-four years after, another weaver, one Jonathan, (Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 31,) led many of the Jews after him into the wilderness, where he promised to shew them signs and wonders. He was burnt alive, and multitudes of the Jews were massacred about Cyrene. This was two years after the destruction of Jerusalem. And Josephus tells, that the great cause of that, was their expectation of their Messiah, then to come. For he says, (Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 12,) "That the chief thing which incited them to that war (with the Romans) was a doubtful prophecy (as he calls it) found in the Holy Scriptures, that, about that time, one of their country should be monarch of the whole world." He said (after the destruction of Jerusalem) that they were deceived in this interpretation of the prophecy; which he (then) applied to the reign of Vespasian, as if fulfilled in him.

V. But what is more remarkable, the Romans themselves had the same notion current among them. And not only they, but all the eastern part of the world, which may well include all that was then known. Thus says Suetonius, in the Life of Vespasian, "Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut eo tempore, Judæa profecti rerum potirentur," that is, "That an ancient and constant tradition had obtained throughout all the East, that in the fates it was decreed, that, about that time, some who should come from Judea, should obtain the dominion, or government," that is, of the world, which the Romans then possessed. And Corn. Tacit. (Hist. l. 5.) speaks almost

in the same words, telling of the great prodigies which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. He says, that many understood them as the forerunners of that extraordinary person, whom the ancient books of the priests did foretell should come, about that time, from Judea, and obtain the dominion, "Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur."

These ancient books of the priests, must either mean the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, in the hands of the Jewish priests, and which were known to the Romans; and if so, it shews the sense of the Jews at that time, and before, that that was the time of the Messiah's coming. Or otherwise, which is more probable, by these books, were meant the oracles of the Sibyls, which were kept with great veneration by the Roman priests, and which very plainly foretold the coming of Christ, and pointed out the very time. And this raised so great an expectation, and a jealousy in the Roman government at that time, with a watchful eye particularly upon the Jews. The same year that Pompey took Jerusalem, one of the sibyl oracles made a great noise, namely, that "nature was about to bring forth a king to the Romans." Which, as Suetonius tells in the Life of Augustus, did so terrify the senate, that they made a decree, that "none born that year should be educated; and that those whose wives were with child did each conceive great hopes, applying the prophecy to themselves." "Senatum exterritum censuisse, ne quis illo anno genitus educaretur, eos qui gravidas uxores haberent, quod ad se quisque spem traheret, curasse ne Senatus consultum ad ærarium deferretur." And Appian, Plutarch, Sallust, and Cicero, do all say, that it was this prophecy of the Sibyls which stirred up Cornelius Lentulus at that time, he hoping that he was the man who should be king of the Romans. Some applied it to Cæsar, which Cicero (*de Divinatione*) after Cæsar's death, ridicules, and cautions that those prophecies should not be interpreted of any future king to be in Rome. "Cum anstititibus agamus et quidvis potius ex illis libris, quam regem proferant: quem Romæ post hæc nec dii, nec homines esse patientur." Virgil, in his famous fourth eclogue, written about the beginning of Herod the Great, compliments the Consul Pollio with this prophecy, by supposing it might refer to his son Saloninus, then born. But the words are too great to be verified of any mere mortal man, and speak of such a golden age and renovation of all things, as cannot be fulfilled in the reign of any earthly king. And Virgil does express it, almost in the words of the Holy Scriptures, wherein they tell of the glorious age of the Messiah; of new heavens, and a new earth, then to begin, and to be finally completed at the end of the world, (Isaiah, lxv. 17; 2 Pet. iii. 13.)

Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas:
Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo
Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.
Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo.

Now the last age decreed by fate is come,
And a new frame of all things does begin:
An holy progeny from heaven descends;
Auspicious be his birth, which puts an end
To the iron age, and from whence shall rise
A golden state far glorious through the earth.

Then the poet runs a division upon the peaceable state of that reign, perfectly a paraphrase of Isaiah, lxv. from verse 17—25. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw as the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

——Nec magnos metuent armenta leones.
Occidet et serpens et fallax herba veneni
Occidet.——

——Nor shall the flocks fierce lions fear.
No serpent shall be there, or herb of poisonous juice.

Nay, the very atonement for our sins, which Daniel attributed to the Messiah, (ix. 24,) "To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity," is thus expressed in this eclogue:

Te duce, si qua mannent sceleris vestigia nostri,
Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.

By thee, what footsteps of our sins remain
Are blotted out, and the whole world set free
From her perpetual bondage, and her fear.

And the very words of Haggai, (ii. 6,) seem to be literally translated by Virgil. Thus says the prophet of the coming of the Messiah, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come." And thus the poet,

Aggredere O magnos (aderit jam tempus) honores,
Chara Deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.
Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum.
Terrasque, tractusque, maris, cœlumque profundum.
Aspice venturo lætenter ut omnia seclo.

Enter on thy high honour, now 's the time,
Offspring of God, O thou great gift of Jove!
Behold the world, heaven, earth, and seas do shake.
Behold how all rejoice to greet that glorious age!

And as if Virgil had been learned in the doctrine of Christ, he tells that these glorious times should not begin immediately upon the birth of that wonderful person, then expected to come into the world; but that wickedness should still keep its ground in several places.

Pauca tamen suberunt priscæ vestigia fraudis.
——Erunt etiam altera bella.

But yet some remains shall still be left
Of ancient fraud, and wars shall still go on.

Now, how Virgil applied all this, is not the matter; whether in part to Augustus, or partly to Pollio, and partly to Saloninus, his

son, then newly born. But it shews the general expectation that there was, at that time, of the birth of a most extraordinary person, who should introduce a new and golden age, and both reform and govern the whole world,—justly, therefore, called by the prophet, " the Desire of all nations."

Now the Sibyls had pointed out the time to be then at hand ; and if it should be supposed (though there is no reason for it) that the Jews had forged or interpolated these oracles, and made them speak thus in the language of the Holy Scriptures, yet this still shews, that the Jews at that time did so understand the prophecies of the Old Testament, concerning the Messiah, as that then was the time prefixed for his coming.

But if these prophecies of the Sibyls be what they speak themselves, (against which nothing but presumption has yet appeared,) then can they not be denied as a demonstrative proof of our Jesus being the Messiah ; for they describe him so personally, and so plainly, that this is made the cause of suspicion against them ; as if they could not be genuine, because they speak so very plainly and particularly of Jesus Christ.

This has carried some Christian critics too far, to reject, upon this only presumption, the authority of the Sibyls. And yet they have not (not any of them that I can find) taken into due consideration the answer which Origen gives to this same objection of theirs, for it is not a new one. It was first objected by the heathens. Celsus had recourse to this, alleging that the Christians had interpolated and added several things to the prophecies of the Sibyls. But[2] Origen appeals to the ancient copies of them, and provokes Celsus, or any of the heathens, to shew what was added, which he says they could not instance, and that certainly they would if they could. Yet some of our critics have declared themselves, in this, for Celsus against Origen ; but without answering of Origen's argument, which Celsus could not. And it is not to be imagined that Origen would have put the issue upon such a plain matter of fact, if it had not been true, and which could have been so easily disproved.

But this especially is to be considered, that the primitive fathers of the Church, — as Justin, Clemens, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Origen, Eusebius, Lactantius, &c.—did lay so great stress upon the Sibyls, and quoted them so often against the heathens, that they called the Christians Sibyllianists. Clemens Alexandrinus, in his Stromat. l. 6. quotes Saint Paul (some work of his now lost) in his disputations with the Gentiles, referring them to their own Sibyls. And he lived near to the time of Saint Paul ; so that we must suppose this to have been at least the current opinion of that early age of Saint Clement. This is observed *obiter*, for the sake of some Christian critics, who seem not to have a due regard for the authority of the primitive fathers of the Church.[3]

But as to what concerns you Jews, and the present subject we are upon, there can be no dispute, by what is quoted out of the Sibyls, by several authors, before Christ came, that they spoke of a wonderful person to appear in the world, who should rule all nations ; and that it was understood, as well by the then Jews as Romans, to be about that time in which our Jesus was born. Now there could be none but Jews or heathens to have made these prophecies of the Sibyls, (there being no Christians then in the world ;) and, as said before, it is all one, as to our present argument, whether the one or the other made them. For I bring them now only to shew, that there was a general expectation of the Messiah, at that time, when our Jesus was born. And I have shewn that it was universal all the world over, the greatest part of which was then under the Roman government ; who likewise testify, that all the eastern part of the world had the same expectation.

And that not only at that time, as if then put into their heads, (by the craft or artifice of the Jews, as some fanciful men have pleased themselves to imagine ;) but that they had it all along as an ancient and undoubted tradition, written in the books of fate ; and that it should come to pass at that very time ; and never but at that time was there any such general expectation.

This universal impulse (if we will call it no more) which was imprinted, in whatever manner, upon the minds of the whole earth, to expect a glorious and wonderful deliverer, restorer, and king of the world, at that time, when our blessed Lord and Saviour was born, (and never before or since) cannot be made of less account, than a very extraordinary, and even divine apparatus, or preparing of the way, whereby to introduce the Son of God with the general expectation and commotion of whole nature, into the world !

And among all these, the expectation was most firm, as there was most reason, with you, the Jews, who had the lively oracles of the Holy Scriptures, which punctually pointed

[2] Ἀποφηνάμενος, ὅτι παρενηγράψαμεν εἰς τὰ ἐκείνης πολλὰ καὶ βλάσφημα· καὶ μὴ ἀποδεῖξας μηδ' ὅτι παρενηγράψαμεν· ἀπέδειξε δ' ἂν, εἰ τὰ ἀρχαιότερα καθαρώτερα ἐδείκνυε, καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντα ἅπερ αὐτοὶ παρεγγεγράφθαι· μὴ ἀποδείξας δὲ μήδ' ὅτι βλάσφημά ἐστι ταῦτα. Origen contra Cels. l. vii. p. 369.

[3] What is said of the Sibyls I would have so understood, as that I do not put the stress whether those books of the Sibyls that we have now, have received no additions or interpolations from what they were in the second century, when quoted by the fathers ; but that, as they were then, and before Christ came, they had most flagrant testimonies to our blessed Saviour, which confounded the Gentiles ; and that they were not at that time corrupted, as there is no proof that they have been since.

out the time wherein God had decreed to send his great Messiah into the world.

This appears with a flagrant evidence, in your setting up, at that time, this and that person for the Messiah (as I have before shewn, out of Josephus) and so continued to the destruction of Jerusalem.

And since that time, you have not desisted looking out for your Messiah, and following every impostor that, with any or no pretence, set himself up for it. As our Lord, your true Messiah, has foretold to you, that many would come in his name, saying, "I am Christ." "Behold," says he, (Matt. xxiv. 25,) "I have told you before." But you would not believe; and it has turned to your destruction.

VI. The history of these false Messiahs has been lately wrote by Johannes a Lent, and printed Herbonæ, 1697, with sufficient vouchers from the Rabbies of the Jews themselves. Let me but name them, to shew the succession of delusion in the Jews. You have heard before out of Josephus, the multitudes of false Messiahs before the destruction of Jerusalem. Afterwards, A. C. 114, you set up another, in the reign of Trajan, one Andrew, which occasioned the destruction of many thousands of you. Again, in the reign of Adrian, another, whom ye called Bar Cohab, that is, the son of a star, alluding to the star of Jacob, (Num. xxiv. 17.) And again rebelling under this Messiah, caused a most dreadful destruction among you, insomuch that, as yourselves have told it in your own books, there was twice the number of Jews that perished, upon this occasion, more than all those that came out of Egypt, and that you suffered more under Adrian than under Nebuchadnezzar or Titus. When you were at last undeceived (too late) then you changed the name of this false Messiah from Bar Cohab, the son of a star, to Bar Cosibah, that is, the son of a lie, as being a false Messiah.

And how oft have you been deceived since! In the year of Christ 434, in the reign of Theodosius the younger, another pseudo Messiah arose in the island of Crete, who said that he was Moses, and sent from heaven to carry the Jews in Crete on dry ground through the sea, and persuaded several of them to throw themselves into the sea.

In the year of Christ 520, another pseudo Messiah, one Dunaan, arose in Arabia, and with the Jews, who followed him, set upon the bishop and Christians in the city of Negra, and committed great outrages, till he was destroyed.

A. C. 529. The Jews and Samaritans in Palestine were seduced into rebellion by Julian, a pseudo Messiah, which occasioned the destruction of many of them.

And when Mahomet appeared about the year 620, the Jews flocked to him as their Messiah, to which he at first pretended. And they stuck to him, till, as some say, they saw him eat camel's blood, or, as others tell, for other reasons they left him. Indeed, he left them, and set up other pretences.

After, A. C. 721, they followed a certain Syrian, who said that he was Christ.

A. C. 1137. They followed another in France, which occasioned their banishment out of that country, and the slaughter of great numbers of them.

The year following, namely, A. C. 1138, in Persia, a false Messiah taking arms, brought great mischiefs upon the Jews there.

A. C. 1157. The Jews rising under another Messiah, in Spain, had well nigh all of them been cut off.

A. C. 1167. They suffered much, under another Messiah, in the kingdom of Fez.

And the same year, under another in Arabia; who gave for a sign, that after his head was cut off, by the king of Arabia, he would rise to life, which he did not, but by this escaped a more cruel death. And not long after, in the same twelfth century, they suffered much by another beyond Euphrates, who gave for his sign, that he would go to bed leprous, and rise sound in the morning.

About the year 1174, another arose in Persia, and led the Jews into rebellion, which occasioned great destruction among them; and one David Almusar, occasioned the like to them in Moravia, in Germany.

And again, in the same century, another pseudo Messiah; all mentioned by Maimonides and other Jewish Rabbins.

Who likewise tell us of that most famous pseudo Messiah, in Persia, called David El David, alias, David Alroy, about the year 1199, or 1200, a great magician, who deluded many of the Jews.

A. C. 1222. Many Jews followed a false Messiah in Germany, whom they called the Son of David; and the same year expected their Messiah to be born of a woman, then with child, at Worms; but it proved a girl.

A. C. 1465. When the Saracens made such inroads upon Christendom, the Jews then thought their Messiah was come to fight their battles.

And the same year, Rabbi Abraham Avenaris, a Jewish astrologer, from the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the sign Pisces, foretold the coming of the Messiah to be then at hand.

And afterwards R. Abarbanel, in his Commentary upon Daniel, (p. 84, 86.) gathered the time of the Messiah's coming from the like conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces.

About the year 1497, the Jews were again deceived in Ishmael Sophus, whom they took for their Messiah, who having got together an army of vile and profligate men, pursued his victories successfully through Media, Parthia, Persia, Mesopotamia, and

Armenia; but at last cheated the Jews, and set up a new sect for Mahomet.

A. C. 1500. Rabbi Ascher Lemla appeared in Germany, as the forerunner of the Messiah, who he promised should come, and restore the Jews to the land of Canaan, that same year. And the Jews generally every where did believe him; and appointed public fasts and prayers to prepare for the coming of their Messiah.

About the year 1534, a new Messiah rose up in Spain, who was burned by Charles, V.

As was another at Mantua, R. Salomo Malcho, whom many of the Jews did believe came again to life after he was burned, and every sabbath visited his wife Zephati.

But the emperor spared R. David, who called himself one of the emissaries of the Messiah, then soon to come: who, when he was at Rome, is said to have fasted six days together.

Another pseudo Messiah rose up in the East Indies about the year 1615.

And another in Holland, A. C. 1624.

But the famous pseudo Messiah Sabethai Zevi, A. C. 1666, is a story remarkably known, who, after all the expectation of the people of the Jews, turned at last Mahometan, to save his life.

And no longer since than the year 1682, there has got up another false Messiah, R. Mardochai, a German Jew, whom almost all the Jews in Italy, and many in Germany, have owned; but, like wise men, with due respect to the Inquisition and self-preservation. Whether he be yet alive, or what stress the present Jews do lay upon him, I cannot tell, nor do I suppose they will be willing to own.

But from the foregoing account, I would lay before them what a strange uncertainty they are at,—running after every impostor for their Messiah—having lost all the marks whereby they may know their Messiah—nay, being willing they should be lost; and disputing against them, for this only reason, that because all the marks given of the Messiah, in the Old Testament, do meet in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and can never meet in any other, therefore they would have no marks of him at all.

The learned Jew who disputed with Limborch, an. 1687, (five years after their last, or present Messiah, R. Mardochai, appeared) contends, that the prophets foretold neither the time or place of the nativity of the Messiah, (Limb. p. 73;) and says, (p. 55,) that miracles were not needful to prove his mission, but only to gather the Jews together from all parts of the world, and to conquer the nations.

Agreeable to this notion, the pseudo Messiah before mentioned, who arose in Persia, A. C. 1138, when desired to shew some miracle to prove his mission, said, that the Messiah was not to be known by miracles, but by his success in conquering the world.

And your famous Maimonides says the same, (H. Melac. and Milch. c. 11,) that the Messiah was not to work miracles, but to fight the Lord's battles, and conquer all before him.

Mahomet made the like excuse for his not working of miracles. He said, (Alcoran, c. 2, &c.) that Moses, Solomon, and Jesus were sent to shew God's righteousness, wisdom, and clemency, to which miracles were necessary to gain belief, but that he (Mahomet) was sent to shew God's fortitude; to which no miracles were necessary, but to enforce it with the sword, which carried its own conviction.

The guilt and folly of this excuse is apparent. For at the first setting up of any for the Messiah, how shall it be known that he shall have success? We see how often the Jews have been deceived and ruined by it. But do they believe that their Messiah shall have success, without interruption, all along from his first setting up? No, the learned Jew before mentioned, interpreting the death of the Messiah, which is spoke of Isa. liii. only of troubles and afflictions which he should endure, says, (Limborch, p. 53. and 127,) it shall be in the wars with the nations, before he complete the redemption of the Jews; and then (says the learned Jew) shall be fulfilled that prophecy of Jeremiah, "Et erit dies tribulationis Jacob, sed ex ea salvabitur," "That the Jews shall suffer great tribulation, but shall be saved out of it;" so that, by this rule, they cannot know their Messiah, by his success, till he is quite ruined and destroyed, and they confounded, as it has hitherto befallen them.

One would think this enough to open their eyes, that while they have obstinately rejected the sure and infallible marks which God by his prophets has given of the Messiah, they have left to themselves no marks or rules at all, whereby they can know him, or which do distinguish him from every impostor.

The Jews, in our Saviour's time, did expect that the Messiah, when he came, would work miracles, (Job, vii. 31.) Many of the false Messiahs pretended to it. And no doubt the present Jews would think it a great confirmation of any who should now set up for their Messiah. Which shews, that they dispute against the necessity of miracles to vouch the Messiah, because they cannot deny those of our Saviour. And it likewise discovers their diffidence in ever having a true Messiah to come, (whatever they pretend,) because they dare not put it to the issue of a miracle, or trust that they shall have any who shall be endowed with such a power.

Yet they reject him, who they cannot but own had that power, and confess that they are ready to acknowledge another without that power; that is, they reject the strongest

credentials, and will accept of lesser. They cannot deny this to be their case. They will not say that they do not desire they had a Messiah who could work miracles to vouch his mission. And their doctors have asserted, "That as the Messiah was to be greater than Moses; so when he came, he should work greater miracles than Moses had done." As it is quoted out of R. Levi, Ben Gerson, Parascha, by Theodoric Hackspan, in his edition of R. Lipmann's book, Nizachon, an. 1644, p. 387. Yet now they cry down miracles as a mark of the Messiah, because they despair of any such; that is, indeed, of any Messiah at all to come. For no otherwise can they know him, whenever they suppose that he should come. They confess that they cannot know him by the time when he should come, nor by the works he shall do when come, other than by the issue of his battles, which they cannot know beforehand, and consequently can never be sure with whom to join, in time, before it be too late, as they have hitherto experimented in all their false Messiahs.

I would entreat them to think of another thing, as to the time of the Messiah's coming. They never set up any false Messiah, nor did any pretend to it, till near the time that our blessed Saviour came into the world, which was the time foretold by Daniel and the Prophets. And since that time, they have been perpetually setting up of false Messiahs, one after another, even to our times. Which shews plainly, that the time wherein our Messiah did come, was the time wherein he was generally expected by the Jews; and that then they understood their Law and their Prophets, in the same sense that we have done, as to the time of the Messiah's coming, though now they would dissemble it.

VII. I come now, in the next place, to consider (what I have before hinted) the excuse that you have for the delay of your Messiah's coming beyond the time (as yourselves have confessed) which was foretold by the Prophets. And you have so little to say upon this point, that you only pretend your sins have hindered his coming. This is a very bare, and looks like a guilty put off. Surely it cannot satisfy yourselves: for I pray you to consider, 1. What are those sins you now complain of? They must be more than common sins, that should defeat so many express and solemn prophecies. And by your interpretation of Isaiah, liii. (before spoke to) you pretend to be righteous and holy to a superlative degree,

But what are those sins that should prevent the coming of your Messiah? Are they greater than those of which you were formerly guilty in the days of Moses? (read Deut. ix.)—and from that time to the captivity, (2 Kings, xvii. 7—24.)—in the captivity and after, (Ezra, ix; Neh. ix; Ezek. xvi; Dan. ix; Zech. vii. and the whole prophecy of Malachi.) No, you are not now so guilty of these idolatries and vile abominations; you have greatly reformed yourselves from these; and (excepting only your rejecting of your Messiah, and standing out still against him) you have not now, nor have had since his coming, more sins to answer for, or more notorious, than other men. So that this, of your supposing the coming of the Messiah to be delayed for your sins, seems only to be an excuse, because you can find no other.

2. The coming of the Messiah is promised as a remedy for sin. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness," (Zech. xiii. 1.) And what is before quoted, (Dan. ix. 24.) expresses the design of his coming to be, "To make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity." So that our sins are so far from being a reason for the deferring of his coming, that they are rather an argument for the hastening of it. The prophet Jeremiah, speaking of the coming of the Messiah, and the condition of the Jews at that time, (Jer. iii.) recites their most horrible wickedness, and of Judah worse than Israel, and promises the new covenant of the Messiah, as a redemption to the penitent: when God would give them "pastors, according to his own heart, which should feed them with knowledge and understanding," (ver. 15.) And to shew that this was not the renewing or restoring of the legal dispensation, but the leaving it behind, for one more excellent, it is added, (ver. 16,) "In those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more." And this is the time of the great wickedness of Israel. And this is according to the tradition which your Rabbi Juda tells in Masoreta under the title *de Synedrio, c. Helec.* that at the time of the coming of the Son of David, the temple should be a den of thieves or unclean persons. And that this should be a time of great dissoluteness, is likewise delivered in your Talmud, tit. *de Synedrio*, and *de Ponderibus*, &c. and by several of your Rabbies. So that this excuse, of your Messiah delaying his coming because of your sins, is against your own expositions and traditions, as well as not only without any ground from, but contrary to, the tenor of the Holy Scriptures; which I come next to shew, yet more expressly.

3. The promises of the coming of the Messiah are not only positive, and without any condition; but the case is expressly put, of the sins of David or of his posterity; and there God declares, that though he will punish those sins, yet that, because of them, he would not

break or alter the promise he had given concerning the coming of the Messiah, (2 Sam. vii. 14—16 ; Psalm lxxxix. 30, 33—37.)

4. But I have another answer yet to give ; and I beseech you seriously to consider of it. That is, whether it would not be as great a punishment to your sins, if God has blinded your eyes, that you should not know your Messiah when he came, and a much greater punishment than if his coming had been delayed? And now consider, whether this be not the case. It has been plainly prophesied, that your builders would reject the chief corner stone, (Psal. cxviii. 22.) That he should be "for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem : and that many among them should stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared and be taken," (Isai. viii. 14, 15.) "Stay yourselves and wonder ; cry ye out, and cry : they are drunken, but not with wine : they stagger, but not with strong drink : for the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes : the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered ; and the vision of all is become unto you, as the words of a book that is sealed," (xxix. 9—11.) Is not this literally your case? Are not your prophets now to you as a book sealed up? Do you understand by them, when you are to expect your Messiah? or what are the signs of his coming? No, they are all long since past ; and you are left in the dark, in endless and groundless expectation !

And in this method, there is no breach of God's promises ; and yet his judgments have their full scope ; and there is still room and hopes of his mercy. When his time comes to open your eyes, then will you return to him, and he will turn to you. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail covers his face from you, that is, the true import and full end of the law ; which vail is done away in Christ. For "Christ is the end of the law for righteousnes to every one that believeth."

5. To avoid all the absurdities of this pretence of yours, some of you have set up another notion, namely, that the Messiah did come at the time foretold by the prophets, and has been in the world ever since, and is still ; but for your sins, conceals himself among the lazars or lepers that sit at the gates of Rome or elsewhere ; others say, (Theodor. Hackspan, ubi supra, p. 351,) that he is in paradise, but there fettered in a woman's hair. This we must suppose is by way of allusion to Samson and Delilah. Some of the Rabbies put a mystical sense upon this, meaning by the woman's hair in which the Messiah is tied, our evil concupiscence, which retards his coming.

How horribly absurd and ridiculous is this ! These sort of strained excuses were enough to convert any men of reason amongst you ; besides that they are contradictory, which shews one must be false, for the former pretence overthrows this ; and this, if true, destroys that. But what foundation have you for this?

What prophecies have you for such a state of the Messiah?

What ! was the end of his coming, to keep himself concealed for sixteen hundred years ; and all that time to undergo so miserable and wretched a life as you would have him?

How was his coming to be "a light to the Gentiles," so often prophesied of, if the Gentiles have not heard of him from that time to this?

If he has undergone the state of a leper and a beggar, now for sixteen hundred and ninety-nine years, how do you object the afflictions and low estate of Jesus for thirty-three years, as inconsistent with the glorious state of the Messiah?

But if he be come, and you know him not, and that this, you think, will solve all those prophecies concerning the time of his coming, behold your own conjecture truly fulfilled : he is come, and you have not known him ; while the Gentiles have been convinced by his miracles, and submitted to him, even to the uttermost parts of the earth, as was expressly prophesied of him.

Again, if you did not know him, what hinders but that you might likewise persecute him? And why should this seem a thing so impossible to you? Have ye not done the same to almost all of your own prophets? You stoned Zechariah in the "court of the house of the Lord," (2 Chron. xxiv. 21 ;) you persecuted Jeremiah till the day that Jerusalem was taken, (Jer. xxvi. 8, 9 ;) and the hands of your priests and your prophets were chief in the pursuit of his blood ; and after them the cry of all the people, as it was in your persecution of your Messiah. How often did you rebel against Moses, against David, against Solomon, against all your prophets? How do they all complain against you? "Moreover, all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem : and the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers.—But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy," (2 Chron. xxxvi. 14—16.) And now it has risen a hundredfold more since your despising and misusing of your Messiah ; and your not knowing your Messiah was a just judgment upon you for your rejecting and persecuting all your former prophets. Elijah

complained that you had slain them all, every one of the prophets, but himself alone, (1 Kings, xix. 10,) and he was forced to fly for his life, and was miraculously preserved. In the solemn confession of the priests and the Levites, and the covenant which they and the princes sealed, they confess that they "slew the prophets, who testified against them, to turn them to the Lord," (Neh. ix. 26.) This branch was never forgot in all their confessions, for it was notorious: "We have not hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land," (Dan. ix. 6.) Why, then, should it be thought a thing impossible with you, that you should not hearken unto the last prophet, the Messiah, who refused to hearken to any before him? Read all your provocations, (recorded Psalm cvi.) and then your present obstinacy will not appear so strange to you, or so totally disproportionable to your former demeanour. It is said, (ver. 7,) "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt;" then it is possible that you might not understand the wonders of your Messiah.

Your forefathers killed the prophets, and your fathers built their sepulchres, and you say, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets; wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them who killed the prophets," (Matt. xxiii. 29—31, &c.) And how have you "filled up the measure of your fathers?" As our Messiah told you beforehand that you would do, (Luke, xi. 49, 50;) that he would send you prophets and apostles, and that you would slay and persecute them; "that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, might be required of your generation." And how severely has it been required! Believe, in this, our Messiah to have been a true prophet; and that this last sin of your crucifying him, and persecuting his apostles and messengers whom he sent unto you, has been greater, as it has been more grievously punished, than all your former provocations; of which, that you may be more sensible, (for it is a material consideration,) I invite you, as the last thing I shall say upon this head, to make the comparison betwixt your former captivities and sufferings, and that much more heavy hand of God, which has lain upon you since your crucifying of your Messiah.

6. In the book of Judges, you are told of the several captivities into which you were sold for your repeated idolatries: 1*st*, Unto the hand of the King of Mesopotamia for eight years; then, 2*dly*, After forty years of deliverance, unto the King of Moab for eighteen years, (Judg. iii. 8, 11, 14;) 3*dly*, Unto Jabin, King of Canaan, for twenty years, (iv. 2;) 4*thly*, Into the hand of Midian for seven years, (vi. 1;) 5*thly*, Of the Philistines and Ammonites for eighteen years, (x. 8;) 6*thly*, Of the Philistines for forty years, (xiii. 1;) the *seventh*, was the great and longest captivity of seventy years in Babylon. All these for your idolatry. But after this you were cured of your idolatry; and to this day have kept yourself in the greatest abhorrence of it; and yet, now, since your rejecting of our Messiah, and saying, "Let his blood be upon us and our children," you have undergone, not a bare captivity, as in Babylon, where you were all together, and prophets sent amongst you to comfort you, and assure you of a restoration, and that in seventy years, but a dispersion over the face of the whole earth, without a king, without any prophet, as a people forsaken of God, and without a temple or sacrifice, and that not only for seventy or seven hundred, but now almost seventeen hundred years.

And if this heavy judgment be come upon you for your not understanding the promises of God, and thereby hardening yourselves against the clear proofs which your Messiah brought of his mission, then is there no appearance of your being delivered, till you shall repent of this greater sin, and more grievously punished than your idolatries,—to reject and crucify your Messiah!

The ingenious and learned Jew before mentioned answers to this, (Limborch, p. 99,) that the captivity of the ten tribes has been longer than that of the two tribes; and it cannot be said that the captivity or dispersion of the ten tribes was for the rejecting of their Messiah; and therefore, that it cannot be concluded, that the lesser punishment of the two tribes was for a more heinous sin (namely, of crucifying their Messiah) than that sin (namely, of idolatry) for which principally the ten tribes were delivered to captivity.

Ans. Though the ten tribes were sent into captivity about one hundred and twenty years before the two tribes, yet their captivity has not been so long; for, as the temporal punishment of any man ends with his death, so the punishment of a nation, as a nation, ceases when that nation has lost its name, and is scattered or incorporated into other nations. Particular persons who have descended of that nation may suffer, but the nation is no more, and so cannot be said to suffer, when it is extinct. As when a regiment is broke, it is no more a regiment, though the soldiers are incorporated into other regiments. Thus, in families, a family is said to be extinct when the name is lost, and there are none left to support it, though all the particular persons of that family may live under other names and in other families. And thus it is that the family of the ten tribes of Israel are

long since lost in the world: all the Jews now known being of the family of Judah, as distinct from Israel; but the family of Judah, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites, are still preserved to suffer, a visible example of God's just judgment and indignation against them; the very names of all the other tribes of Israel being so far lost as that not one of them is now known, or any Jew does so much as pretend to be of any of those tribes.

Though it is very probable that many of the ten tribes are incorporated (albeit they may not know it) into the two remaining tribes, yet all go under the name of the two tribes; and therefore the two tribes are they only who are said to suffer: as they only (and such of the ten tribes as were then incorporated with them) were concerned in the rejection and crucifying of their Messiah.

But as the punishment of the two tribes has been so many hundred years continued longer than that of the ten tribes, for this their greater sin of crucifying their Messiah, so there was a plain and visible reason for the at first greater punishment of the ten tribes: —1. They rebelled from under the house of David; 2. They fell into schism against the house of Aaron, and set up new priests of their own; 3. As a consequence of both these, they set up a false worship in the calves of Dan and Bethel, and returned not from their idolatry, their schism, and rebellion, till their extirpation.

And we may see a very legible hand of God upon them, in great judgments, all along from their revolt.

Judah had many bad kings, but some eminently good.

Israel had a succession only of nineteen kings from their defection, among whom there was not one that was good.

And they were carried away captive one hundred and twenty years before the captivity of Judah.

But then the captivity of Judah having been continued so much longer than theirs, (as before has been said,) swells up the punishment of Judah now to exceed theirs, as their sin in crucifying their Messiah has far exceeded all the sins of the house of Israel.

Let me add to this, the many and miserable massacres and destructions of the two tribes since our Saviour, under the several false Messiahs whom they set up; in one of which they suffered more than in either of the destructions of Jerusalem, by the Chaldeans, or the Romans, as before has been shewn from their own confessions.

Now, let us consider, that at the day of judgment, there is no representation of nations; but every man suffers for his own sin; national judgments are only in this world.

And hence it is observable, that no wicked nation has ever yet escaped a national judgment in this world. Though God may bear long with them; yet, if they do not repent, by a national sorrow and amendment, judgment overtakes them even here; for no where else are there any national, either mercies or judgments.

And as all nations have been wicked in their several degrees; so have they every one been severally punished, according to their demerits, even before the sons of men.

But there are no judgments that have befallen any nation so legible, as what have been sent upon your nation, particularly upon the two tribes. No nation, since the earth began, has been kept under so long a captivity and dispersion, so wonderfully preserved, and so remarkably punished — preserved for punishment! and when God's time shall come, for a glorious restoration, in the acknowledgment of your only true and divine Messiah! O that this were the time!

But the learned Jew has another answer, (Limbor. Coll. p. 101. n. iv.) namely, that the Jews have not been free from idolatry, since their return from the captivity of Babylon, nor are at this day; and therefore, that the comparison must fail, which we draw betwixt the punishments that have come upon them for their former idolatries, and this sixteen hundred years' dispersion, after they had forsaken their idolatry; which, he says, they have not yet forsaken. He says, (p. 102,) that they have it in the utmost abomination, and avoid it wherever they can; but that for fear, or other base motives, very many of them have turned Mahometans, in all the dominions of the Turk, in Africa, in Asia, in Persia, and Arabia. But though this be an apostacy, and forsaking of their law, yet he does not charge it as idolatry, because the Mahometans do not worship God by images. But then, he returns upon the Christians, and says, that since the idolatry of the Church of Rome, multitudes of the Jews have, to avoid persecution, embraced the Popish idolatry, in divers countries. And even in our own times, (says he,) we have fresh experiences of it. He names the whole Neapolitan Synagogue of Barcelona, and all the others in Catalonia, who turned to the Church of Rome; and in Spain and Portugal they have turned so fast, that he says, "Ex Judæis apostatis fere omnes et principes, nobiles, et populares, originem ducunt. Quod in iis regionibus adeo notum, ut nemo dubitaverit," that is, "That almost all of them, princes, nobles, and commons, are sprung from apostate Jews: which is so well known in those countries, as that none doubt of it. Notwithstanding (as he says) for the obtaining of great places and honours, especially the ecclesiastical, they are obliged to renounce Judaism, and to bring certificates

that they are not descended of the Jews. Which" (as we may easily believe him) "are attainable at that, as well as other courts, where money is not wanting." This indeed does plainly shew the suspicion, at least, that they are descended of the Jewish race; he says, moreover, that many of their clergy, bishops, and even of the inquisitors themselves, are Jews in their hearts; and dissemble Christianity for the avoiding of persecution, and to gain "honours" and preferments; of whom (he says) some do repent and fly, as they can. And that "there are in Spain both bishops, and the gravest of their monks, whose parents, brothers, and sisters, do fly into this country," (that is, into Holland,) "that they may freely profess Judaism; that many of the Friars, Augustins, Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans, have there and in several other countries, renounced their idolatry;" that is, of the Church of Rome. This, I suppose, he would make an argument of their returning back to Judaism. But he does not deny, that there are many Christian countries, who have thrown off the idolatry of the Church of Rome, and yet do not Judaize. But now, to consider all this whole excuse.

1*st*, If many Jews, to avoid persecution, submit to idolatrous practices — as this learned Jew confesses that he himself had often bowed the knee to Baal, for which he begs God's pardon—yet this is still but the defection of particular persons, and cannot be compared to those national idolatries wherein their kings, and priests, and people did concur, of their own choice, without any force or compulsion: as were their many idolatries before the captivity of Babylon, and none the like since. Their principles were then corrupted, but not since; for they confess that they have idolatry in the greatest abhorrence, though many of them cannot resist unto martyrdom.

2*d*, But this learned Jew has afforded us a very material consideration; for if all Spain and Portugal, or the greatest part of them, and likewise many in other countries, are descended of the stock of the Jews, this may let us in to conjecture what is become of the ten tribes. It is certain they are dispersed among other nations; and though they have lost their name, and consequently their nation, yet their posterity must remain somewhere, under other denominations. It is reasonable to believe, that many of them did return to Judea, after the two tribes were restored to their country, and Jerusalem and their temple were built again, and consequently are mixed among them to this day. It will not be so easy, without this, to reconcile the vast numbers of the Jews that were destroyed in the siege of Jerusalem, under their several false Messiahs, and that are now dispersed all over the world; from whence I make these inferences:

1. That many of the ten tribes might be involved in the guilt of crucifying their Messiah, and standing out against him unto this day; though all going then under the name of Judah, or the two tribes, and consequently sharing with them in the punishment.

2. If the Spaniards, Portuguese, and other Christians, are of the race of the Jews, they must be of the ten tribes, so far, at least, as they were mixed with the two tribes. And they turned more into other nations than the two tribes, because they have lost their name and nation, which only survives in the two tribes. Therefore the ten tribes may be said to be more converted to Christianity than the two tribes, who only, by name, of all the tribes, persist in their infidelity against Christ our Lord.

This will make the punishment of the ten tribes for their idolatry, schism, and rebellion, much less than that of the two tribes for the rejecting and crucifying of their Messiah; and this sin of the two tribes to be much greater than that of their own former idolatries, as the punishment of it has been many ways more remarkably transcendent. Which I pray God you may lay to heart as you ought.

3. Many myriads of the Jews, as well priests as others, (Acts, xxi. 20; vi. 7,) were converted to Christianity, in the beginning of the Gospel, upon conviction of what they themselves had seen and heard. About three thousand at one sermon, (Acts, ii. 41,) five thousand at another, (iv. 4,) "Multitudes, both of men and women," (v. 14.) These, with their religion, lost (in time) their nation, or the name of Jews, having embraced that of Christians in the stead of it; and their posterity are Christians, though of the Jewish race.

Now, by reasonable computation, there are more of these Christian Jews at this day in the world, than of all that are known by the name of the Jews.

For the Jews were almost all cut off, and utterly extinct, in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; and more afterwards by Adrian, for adhering to their false Messiah Barcosbas. And all that now go by the name of Jews, are sprung from the small remainders that were left out of these destructions, like brands plucked out of the fire.

Whereas the Christian Jews escaped all these, and all that came upon the other Jews, for their several false Messiahs before mentioned. And, which is wonderfully observable, the Christian Jews that were in Jerusalem when it was besieged, were saved by a miraculous providence; the siege being unaccountably raised for a short time, till the Christian Jews, taking hold of that warning of our Saviour, (Matt. xxiv. 16,) fled to Pella, a city in the mountains; and thereby escaped that dreadful overthrow, which swept away the

unbelieving Jews that waited their fate in Jerusalem. By this, it appears that the stock of the Christian Jews has increased and spread much farther than that of the infidel Jews; whose tree was twice cut down by Titus and Adrian even to the ground, and left to spring again out of the old root; besides the many great loppings afterwards, under several others of their false Messiahs. Whereas the believing Jews have increased and multiplied without any of these interruptions, and spread far and wide through the world. From whence we must conclude, that much the greatest number of the Jews are converted, and have embraced the Christian faith; and by this means are delivered from that servitude and dispersion, which now lies only, as a curse, upon those infidel Jews who continue in their obstinacy against the Messiah.

Let me here take notice of another passage in the place before quoted of Limborch, where the learned Jew, speaking of the defection of so many of the Jews to idolatry, to Mahometism, &c. according to the countries where they live, wishes the Jews were as good, as this argument of the Christians would suppose them, namely, that they had reformed from their idolatry since their return from the captivity of Babylon, and were in other respects better than before, excepting that sin of rejecting their Messiah, and persisting in it: which this learned Jew will by no means allow, but, to avoid the force of this argument, he makes the Jews now more wicked than ever. Upon which occasion, I would mind you of your exposition (before mentioned) of the liii. of Isaiah, which makes them most holy and righteous, (see p. 7,) and that their dispersion was for the conversion of the Gentiles by them; whereas now you make them grow more and more wicked, and that they are corrupted every where with the idolatries and delusions of the nations, instead of converting them.

Theodore Hackspan, in his book before quoted, p. 394, cites the Jewish Rabbies and Talmud, making the ancient Jews much better than the modern: he quotes Jalkut upon the first of Isaiah; and upon these words, that "Righteousness lodged in Jerusalem," R. Juda F. R. Simonis says, "That there was not a man then to be found in Jerusalem, in whose hands any sin was to be found." But how was this? "The daily morning sacrifice did cleanse the sins of the night, and the daily evening sacrifice the sins of each day; so that none was to be found in Jerusalem upon whom there was any sin." Thus he. But of the Jews, after the daily sacrifice did cease, it is said in the Talmud by Jochanan Massech, (Joma. cap. 1.) that "a nail of the former Jews was better than the whole body of the after Jews," because the daily sacrifice was wanting, by which the former Jews were cleansed.

See how vile the modern Jews are here made, ever since the destruction of the second temple! How vile this learned Jew here makes them! And this, that they might find an excuse for the delay of the Messiah thus long after the time foretold by the prophets.

But at another turn, when they apply what is said of the sufferings of the Messiah in the liii. of Isaiah to their own present suffering state, then they are "the righteous servant of the Lord," and "there is no deceit in their lips!" Then do they apply to themselves all that righteousness which is there spoken of the Messiah. At one time they are more vile than the heathen among whom they are mixed! At another time, they are righteous above all that are on the earth! And by their righteousness the Gentiles are to be converted!

These contradictory pretences, set up severally as they are pinched, shew the desperateness of their cause. Therefore I will labour this point no farther, but proceed to another topic.

VIII. It is strange that you will adhere so obstinately to the letter of those promises made to Levi, which yet you must acknowledge are, according to the letter, and have been, long broken; and yet so easily get over the letter of the promises concerning the Messiah, which can never be fulfilled but in the person of Jesus Christ.

Especially considering, that in that famous prophecy of the Messiah, (Psalm cx.) it is expressly said that he should be a priest, not of the order of Levi, but of Melchizedek. Here was a new priesthood. And a change of the priesthood does necessarily infer a change also of the law. In your sense of the promises to Levi, you make that promise, of the future priesthood after another order, to be a contradiction to the promises made to Levi; but in our sense they both stand together, and the one fulfills and completes the other. If you will admit no change of the Levitical priesthood, you must throw off the Psalms of David, as well as the Gospel of Christ. Then consider, that the promise to the priesthood, of which David then prophesied, was confirmed by an oath that God would not alter his purpose, "I have sworn, and will not repent." There was no oath to the priesthood of Levi. Again, the priesthood of the Messiah was declared to be eternal, "Thou art a priest for ever." And the type of this priesthood in Melchizedek, was more noble than that in Levi; because Abraham, the father of Levi, and of all Israel, did pay an acknowledgment to the priesthood of Melchizedek, as superior to his own, in paying of tithes to Melchizedek, instead of receiving tithes from him, and being blessed by Melchizedek as his superior.

When the flowing in of the Gentiles to the

Church is described, it is written, (Isaiah, lxvi. 21,) "I will take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord;" or, if this were to be understood of the Jews, yet the covenant with Levi would be at an end, if the priesthood were enlarged to let in those of other tribes. And it is promised, (Exod. xix. 6,) "ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests." This could not be under the Mosaical dispensation; but it is under the evangelical, where the priesthood, which is designed to serve the whole earth, is not, it cannot be, confined to one family, or tribe, or nation; and so the whole kingdom of God, which is the whole world, as they that are made capable of the covenant of grace, so also of the priesthood.

And if the whole Gentile world were gathered unto you (as you expect) then surely the one tribe of Levi would not be sufficient for priests to them all. So that, according to your own expectation, there must be a change. And yet,

IX. Your great objection is, that God cannot alter any thing that he has once ordained. It is true God is immutable, and cannot change; and what he ordains, must answer the ends for which he has ordained it. He does not always tell us what those ends are, and therefore we cannot always tell when they are accomplished. But when he pleases to make known to us the ends for which he has ordained such things, what it is they tend to, and when they are to be accomplished, then when they are accomplished at the time he has named, to think this any breach of promise, or alteration in God, which is the highest proof of his veracity and unchangeableness, is a great weakness in our understandings, and our great unhappiness, when this betrays us to oppose and fight against the council of God, and forfeit our share in his glorious dispensations, all ordained to bring us to bliss.

1. This objection of yours, which keeps you from Christianity, is that which has divided the Samaritans from you. They stick to the institutions given to the fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: and think that what was after commanded to Moses, cannot alter what God had before appointed. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain (said a woman of Samaria to our Messiah,) and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," (John, iv. 20.) Our Lord determined the case on your side, against the Samaritans, and said that "salvation is of the Jews." But by the same argument that you can defend yourselves against the Samaritans, you must yield up the cause to the Christians. For if God could alter his institutions, from what he gave to the fathers, to what he commanded by Moses, why not from what he commanded by Moses, to what he instituted by Christ?

2. If you say, that the argument will run on to all changes, as from what he instituted by Christ, to what it is pretended he anew revealed to Mahomet, and so on to the end of the world, and then nothing can be certain.

I answer, that Mahomet could not prove his pretended revelations by those marks as Moses and Christ did; and they only, as shewn in the "Method with the Deists." And we may safely venture all the impostors in the world to counterfeit these marks, and to believe them if they can.

But in the next place, Christ was foretold by Moses, (Deut. xviii. 18,) "yea, and all the prophets that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days," in which our Messiah came into the world, and fulfilled all that they had prophesied of him. So that the Gospel is a confirmation and fulfilling of the law, and bears witness to it.

But though the Alcoran does acknowledge both the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and so far bears witness to them; yet it cannot shew that Mahomet was foretold either by Moses or Christ, or by any of the prophets; nay Christ has told that he is the last, and none to come after him; and therefore gives us caution to believe none such. So that the Alcoran is in direct opposition both to the Law and the Gospel.

If Moses had said that he himself was the last that God would send, then could not you expect any Messiah to come; but since Moses has told us (Deut. xviii. 19) of a prophet that God would send after him, and commanded all to hear him, and threatens God's judgments upon those who will not hearken to the words of God which he shall tell them, what difficulty should you make to hearken unto him, who has come with the same attestation and seal of God, as Moses himself did?

3. If you say, that you are forbidden (Deut. xiii.) to trust even miracles against what Moses commanded; that Scripture shall be considered by and by; and it will be shewn, that it extends only as to the worship of false gods; and that they are not true but seeming miracles that are there spoken of.

But your Talmud (tit. *de Synedrio*) gives this as a standing rule, that "any command whatsoever may without scruple be transgressed by the command of a prophet," that is, who works miracles to attest his mission.

This is to be understood of those commands which stand only upon positive precepts of God's institution, and have not a moral, which is an indispensable, obligation in their own nature.

And of this there are many examples in Scripture, even where no miracles were wrought to warrant them; but they gave place ofttimes to cases of necessity and public good.

How oft have the treasures of the temple, which were hallowed, being dedicated to God, and the very gold upon the doors and pillars of the temple, been given to heathen and idolatrous kings (when other treasure there was none) to procure peace to the kingdom upon great emergencies? And no censure past upon this.

David in a case of necessity, (1 Sam. xxi.) eat of the hallowed bread, and those who were with him, of which it was not lawful for any but the priests to eat; and was blameless.

The command of the sabbath was transgressed, as oft as the eighth day for the circumcision of a child fell upon that day.

Joshua and all the men of war compassed Jericho on the sabbath day, (Josh. vi.)

Circumcision (so positively commanded) was omitted forty years in the wilderness, (Josh. v. 5.)

Samuel sacrificed at Mizpeh, (1 Sam. vii. 7—17,) and built an altar at Ramah, neither of which was the place that God had appointed; which was contrary to the general command (Deut. xii. 13, 14.) And besides, Samuel was no Levite; and therefore it was death for him to offer sacrifice by Num. xviii. 7.

The same did Elijah, (who was not a Levite) and had God's approbation by a great miracle then shewn, (1 Kings, xviii. 38.)

The place of which Moses spoke (Deut. xii. 5, 6,) that God would "choose to put his name there," was established at Shiloh, which bore the name of the Messiah, and was called, "the tabernacle which God had pitched among men," (Psalm lxxviii. 60.) It remained there from the days of Joshua to Samuel, about four hundred and fifty years; and thither they brought their tithes, sacrifices, &c. and came up yearly to worship, as Moses had commanded, (1 Sam. i. 3, 7,) to "the house of the Lord," which was there.

Yet this was altered by the authority of David and Solomon, who set it up at Jerusalem, and moreover made several changes in the courses of the priests and the Levites, and other parts of the worship of God, which Moses had commanded; particularly as to the time of the Levites' service, which, by the commandment of Moses, (Num. iv. 3, 23.) was from the age of thirty to fifty; but this, by the last words of David, (1 Chron. xxiii. 27,) was altered, and they were to begin their service at the age of twenty; and the reason is there given, because the manner of their service was changed, not being so laborious as when they were to carry the tabernacle upon their shoulders; the practice of which ceased, when the house of the Lord was built at Shiloh, after the conquest of Canaan, for then the ark was fixed; and all the tribes repaired to it at Shiloh, (Jos. xviii. 1; 1 Sam. i. 7; iv. 3;) and it was not carried about with them from place to place, as formerly. Yet this alteration of the age of the Levites' service was not made till the time of David, but served ever after, (Ezra, iii. 8.)

And there was no prophecy going before to warrant these changes, nor had Moses spoke any thing of them.

But he spoke expressly of the Messiah, and implied changes to be made by him; for he gives strict charge (Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.) to "hearken to what he should command," and threatens God's judgments to those who should refuse. Now, what occasion was there for this, if he had no more in commission than Moses had, and were to command nothing more or less than Moses had done? If he were only to reinforce what Moses commanded, that was the business of lesser prophets, and would make him less than Moses; which, I suppose, none of you will say.

But beside Moses, we have the joint voice of all the prophets, which do, in express terms, declare, that the Messiah would make great changes from what Moses commanded; and introduce a much more glorious state into the Church, which Isaiah expresses by "new heavens and a new earth," (Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22.) And tells, that at that time God would throw off the Jews, and make others his chosen. "And ye" (says God to your nation) "shall leave your name for a curse to my chosen; for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name," (Isa. lxv. 15.) And, "In those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more," (Jer. iii. 16.) "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt," (Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.—See Ezek. xvi. 61, "Not by thy covenant.")

And it is told, that the Messiah should be a priest, but not of the order of Levi, as before shewn, p. 21. And, as your priesthood, so it is said that God would reject and put an end to your sacrifices, and bring in their place the great and only expiatory sacrifice of the Messiah. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required." What then? "A body hast thou prepared me," says the Messiah. And, "Lo, I come; to do thy will O God; in the volume of the book it is so written of me," (Psalm xl. 6, 7.)

Thus it is written of the Messiah, and of the changes which he was to introduce; yet you will have none of them, because they are changes; though you make no scruple of the changes by David, Solomon, and others, of

which there were no prophecies; nor did they attest their mission, as our Messiah has done, by such a multitude of miracles, and of such a wonderful nature, as never before were shewn upon the earth.

Nay, you yourselves have made alterations, without the command of any prophet that you can produce, or of any miracles to warrant you; for you are commanded not to add to what Moses commanded, as well as not to diminish, (Deut. iv. 2; v. 32; xii. 32; Jos. i. 7; Prov. xxx. 6.) Yet how many traditions of your elders do you observe, that were never commanded by Moses,—as the washing of pots and cups, &c. If that were all; for you have traditions quite contrary to the law of God, and which render them of none effect. Moses said, "Honour" (that is, support) "your father and mother;" but ye say, if a man has made a voluntary *corban*, or gift, of what he has, though in reversion, to the temple, or other use of your law, he is free from that part of the fifth command, which you have thus enervated by your tradition: and many other such like things do ye; nay, you have laid an eternal fund of traditions to vie with the written law; these you suppose delivered to Moses, and by him orally conveyed to your elders, of which they have the keeping; and their stock is inexhaustible, and these you make of equal authority to the written law.

What prophet or miracle had you for changing of the posture in eating of the Passover? so positively commanded, (Exod. xii. 11;) yet, after you were at rest in Canaan, you made your own construction upon the equity of the command, and released yourselves from the trouble of that manner of eating it.

You likewise added a *post-cænium* to it, which you observed with as much strictness as the passover itself.

You added baptism to circumcision, and several other things which were not commanded in your law.

Yet you reject your Messiah, because you say he made alterations in the ordinances which Moses delivered.

X. From what has been said, I hope it will not be a difficult task to remove from you all scruple as to that master objection which you most insist upon, grounded upon Deut. xiii. 1—3, where it is said, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, (which thou hast not known,) and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." From hence you would infer, that you are not to believe our Messiah, let his miracles be never so great, because he seeks to turn you after other gods.

Ans. 1*st*, The sign or wonder here mentioned is not any true and real miracle, but only telling of something which might afterwards come to pass. And this has happened, and may happen many times, by chance, which yet may seem a wonder to the people. And it is only against these false and seeming miracles that God here guards his people, which he sometimes permits, for the trial of their faith. Therefore, observe, the word "miracle" is not used here, only *a sign, a wonder*, or *a dream*.

For none can work a true and real miracle but God. And it cannot, without the highest blasphemy, be supposed, that God would work a miracle on purpose to set his seal to a lie. If this were possible, it would destroy all revelation; for how could we know when it were true or false? Therefore, where there can be no doubt as to the miracle, there can be no scruple as to the revelation which that is brought to attest.

Now, the miracles of our Jesus were such, as that there can be no manner of doubt concerning them; the most hardened Deist upon the face of the earth, if he allowed the matters of fact, would grant them to be true and real miracles; and you must either allow them to be such, or throw off all those of Moses, which were neither so great nor so many.

This is the first answer I give, which concerns the nature of the sign or wonder that is spoke of Deut. xiii. The next answer is concerning that thing for which such a sign, or wonder, or dream, is produced; and that is, "To go and serve other gods." And as to this, consider,

2*d*, What are these gods here spoke of? It is told (ver. 7,) "Namely, the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth;" that is, all the gods of the heathen world; and against all these our Jesus is as severe as your Moses, and confirms this very text, and all that Moses commanded against them. They are called "devils" over and over again, (1 Cor. x. 20, 21;) and Christianity, wherever it has come, has rooted out all the Pagan idolatry, more than ever the Law has done.

Obj. 1. If you say, that our Jesus would have men to worship himself.—1*st*, That is none of the gods mentioned in this place of Deuteronomy, for you will not say that any of the heathen did worship the Messiah. 2*dly*, You do not refuse worship to the Messiah. David called him Lord, (Psalm cx. 1;) and said of him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," (Psalm xlv. 6,) and, "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee," (ver. 7,) and

says to the King's daughter, that is, the Church, "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him," (ver. 11.) And God calls him, his fellow or associate, (Zech. xiii. 7.) And commands all the kings of the earth to kiss, that is, to worship the Son, (Psalm ii. 12.) (for that was an act of worship, Job, xxxi. 27; 1 Kings, xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2.) And David speaks of him, (which can be applied to Solomon no otherwise than as he was a type of the Messiah,) "They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations—He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and unto the ends of the earth—All kings shall worship or fall down before him; all nations shall serve him—Prayer shall be made ever unto him, or, he shall ever be adored—All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him, and all the heathen shall praise him," (Psalm lxxii. 5, 8, 11, 15, 17.) These are the very epithets given to the Messiah (and can belong properly to none other) who is called the "Desire of all nations," (Hag. ii. 7.) And that "In him all nations of the earth should be blessed," (Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18.) And "To him shall the gathering of the Gentiles be," (Gen. xlix. 10.) Which is to Christ our Jesus, but was not to Solomon, unless in a very low sense, as he was greatly famed for his wisdom, which made him much respected by many of the heathen. But they had no relation to him, or were gathered to him, as their king or their Saviour, as they are now to our Jesus; whom Solomon did but faintly represent. And if you should apply the worship before mentioned to Solomon, then surely much more to the Messiah. So that the worship of him is established in your own Scriptures. And comes no way within the prohibition of Deut. xiii. which respects only the worship of the heathen deities. Let me add here, what your Talmud (tit. *de Synedrio*) says, that Jesus is not the name of any idol, nor can be reckoned such, when the Christians do refer the honour they pay to him, to God the Creator of all. And (tit. *Schebuoth et Shabbath*) agrees with Rabbi Solomo, who (upon Gen. xxii. 18.) does acknowledge that God might take upon him human nature, and thinks that he had done it for a time. And the Chaldee paraphrase (upon Hos. i. 7, and other places) calls the Messiah the "Word of God," the same that our Saint John calls him, (John, i. 1, &c.) and your Talmud upon *Taanith* says, from Isaiah, xxv. 9, that at that time God would be pointed at, and shewn even with the finger.

The above quoted Psalms, which speak of the worship of the Messiah, are owned to refer to the Messiah. The second Psalm by David Kimchi, Abraham Esdra, R. Jonathan in *Beresith rabba*, and that most learned Rabbi Saadia, who owns the same of Psalm cx. as the Chaldee paraphrase does of Psalm xlv.

But there needs not attestations, for these Scriptures are expressed in such a strain, as may indeed be accommodated, at an infinite distance, to transactions here below, but cannot be properly applied nor verified of any but the Messiah; and some are such as can in no way be adapted to any other. What other did David call his Lord? What other claims the worship of all the kings upon the earth? Whose kingdom but his, is without end, and extends to the "uttermost part of the earth?" All which, in the second Psalm, is given to the Son, but was not given to David. Neither was it given to David that his flesh should not see corruption, as it is promised, (Psal. xvi. 9, 10,) but was verified of none that ever entered the grave, except only of our Messiah.

Obj. 2. You urge our doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as inferring plurality of gods, and so to be brought within the prohibition, Deut. xiii. But you cannot say that this is any of the gods of the heathen, who only are expressed in that command, when we profess to worship none other but that one only God, who spoke to your fathers in Horeb out of the midst of the fire. And we detest all thoughts of any other God; our great Messiah taught us this to be the "first of all the Commandments, that the Lord our God is one Lord," (Mark, xii. 29.) And all expositions of the Blessed Trinity, or inferences from it, that do in the least interfere with this, we condemn as impious and heretical.

But whether this one most simple and uncompounded nature of God may not be communicated to three eternal persons, without either confusion of the persons, or dividing of the substance, does in no way interfere with the unity of the nature, because this very hypothesis does suppose the unity of the nature, in the strictest sense that is possible. And if we should be under great difficulty (as how can it be otherwise) in explaining such an unfathomable mystery, yet can it not infer polytheism upon us, while we are ready to part with all, rather than to admit of that.

You know, we bring many proofs for this out of your Scriptures of the Old Testament, (some are named hereafter,) and you cannot infer from hence, that we do not own these Scriptures, (nay this is a proof that we do own them,) only that we do not understand them aright; and if you should prove against us, that we do not rightly understand (who does?) the divine incomprehensible nature, while we contend, as earnestly as you, for the necessity of its unity, you cannot charge us with polytheism for our mistake in other matters; and therefore this can never come under the prohibition of Deut. xiii.

I say not this, that I would waive entering with you upon this subject, but there is not room for it in this short essay; it would

require a discourse by itself: all that I am at present concerned in, is to shew you, that this can be no cause for your rejecting of our Messiah. There are some called Christians, who say that we have mistaken our Messiah in this point. But I would be loth to clear you from the objection by that method. Only thus much it shews you, that if we have mistaken the Gospel, so have we the Law too, as to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; and this can be no more an argument that we set up polytheism against the Law, than against the Gospel, which as strongly asserts the unity of God as the Law, and confirms all that the Law says of it; therefore, if you reject the Gospel, because we would infer a Trinity from thence, you must, upon the same account, reject the Law too. If our inferences are not just, the Gospel is cleared as well as the Law; and if our arguments do hold, then the Law does infer a Trinity as well as the Gospel.

Nor is it we Christians alone that would infer a Trinity from your law; your own Cabalists do distinguish God into three lights, and some of them call them by the same names as the Christians, of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and yet say, that this does not at all break the unity of God. Your famous Philo expresses the same in many places. Upon the *Sacrifices of Cain and Abel* he says, that God was accompanied with his two supreme virtues of power and goodness, and that God being one, did produce out of his clear mind three operations, of which each is unmeasurable or infinite, for that his powers are unlimitable. And in his second book of the *Husbandry of Noah* he distinguishes these into Τὸ ὄν, τὸ δισποτικὸν, τὴν ἵλεω δύναμιν, that is, being, power, and goodness. In his *Allegories*, he calls the Word, the name of God, and the maker of the world, or the great instrument of God, whereby he made the world, the same as our Gospel, (John, i. 3.) And in his book before quoted of *Husbandry*, he calls the Word by the same name as we do (Heb. i. 3,) Χαρακτὴς, "the express image of God." Moses, the son of Nehemannus, calls him "the Angel the Redeemer," who is called "the Face of God," that is, says he, "God himself," the same that appeared to Jacob at Bethel, and said to Moses in the bush, "I am the God of thy Father," &c. the Lord that should come to his temple, and "the angel of the covenant," prophesied of Mal. iii. 1.

Maimonides, in his book of *Foundations*, and after him Joseph Albo, distinguish in God, 1. that which knows; 2. that which is known; 3. the knowledge itself.

But I will not detain you here with quotations. Our Eusebius, in his book of the *Preparation of the Gospel*, (p. 327,) tells you that all your Rabbies, "after the God of all, and his First-born Wisdom, do join into the same divine nature a third, whom they call the Holy Ghost, by whom your inspired persons were enlightened." And you do all generally agree, that this Holy Spirit was not any thing that was created; and yet you distinguish it from him that sent it. Your Rabbi ——— tells us, that in the word *Elohim*, there are three degrees; each distinct by itself, yet all one; joined in one, yet not divided from one another.

And, as you make that Holy Spirit which inspired the prophets not to be a creature, yet distinct from him who sent him; so you make what you call the Schechina to be a divine thing, and distinguish it not only from God, but from that Holy Spirit; as in your Jerusalem Gemara, of *Documents*, cap. 3. and the Babylonish Gemara, tit. *Joma*, cap. 1. Your R. Jonathan, in the preface *Echa Rabthi*, says, that the Schechina waited three years and a half upon Mount Olivet, expecting the conversion of the Jews.

This was the place where our Jesus (the true Schechina) made his abode, (Luke, xix. 29; xxi. 37;) and whence he rode into Jerusalem, to accomplish his blessed passion; and the time of his preaching was about three years, (Luke, xiii. 7;) so long, he said, he would bear with the obstinate Jews. This may be applied as to what your high priest said, (John, xi. 51.) though himself knew not the true import of it.

Now, then, all these forecited testimonies to the Holy Trinity, whether of Jews or Christians, are not the setting up of any other God, but only searching into the nature of that God whom we acknowledge; as, to give an example, (though any parallel to God must be at an infinite distance,) we argue three great faculties in our soul, the understanding, the memory, and the will, and that these may be understood, without either confusion of the faculties, or division of the substance of the soul. And suppose that some should object, that this was making of three souls; I say, that whatever the consequence might be from this hypothesis, yet that no man could be justly charged with holding three souls in man, who professed that he held but one. We are not to be charged with the consequences of an opinion, so as to infer that we do not hold that opinion: for we may not see all the consequences of what we hold; therefore, though three faculties should infer three souls, yet cannot he who holds three faculties be charged with holding of three souls, while he does hold but one soul, and thinks that the contrary does not follow from his holding of three faculties in the same soul.

Thus, though three persons did infer three Gods; yet does not he hold three Gods, who holds three persons in one and the self-same God.

If you say, that this will excuse all idolatry as of those who worshipped the sun, &c.

because of God's supposed residence there; I answer, No; because, supposing of that residence, yet it would be idolatry to worship the sun, or any thing else, merely because of God's residence in it: as you would have thought it idolatry to have worshipped the temple, or the cloud of glory, because of God's special presence which was there afforded.

But they did not think it to be idolatry; was it therefore none? No, our thoughts cannot alter the nature of things, and there are sins of ignorance. None ever confessed, no, nor, I believe, thought himself to be an idolater: for then, it must be supposed, that he would not continue in it. But he that adores one God in three persons (supposing him mistaken in his judgment) comes not under either of the branches of idolatry,—1. Of a false object; 2. Of a false manner of worship. For the manner, there is no pretence; that consists in the worship of God by images, (which he has forbidden,) whether artificial, of our own making; or natural, by any creature of God's making,—as any of the host of heaven, sun, moon, or stars; or any thing here below, as of men, birds, beasts, fish, &c. though the worship be referred to God, as represented by them, or from his supposed residence or presence in them. This is idolatry in the manner of our worship, but nothing of this can be applied to the three persons, which are supposed to be God himself. This was your idolatry in the golden calf, which you did not take to be God himself, that you yourselves had made; nor could such folly be supposed in your Solomon, as to think the images he made, to be that God that made him. This was the idolatry forbidden in the second command.

Then, for the first command, which relates to the object of worship. If that be taken for setting up any creature as the Supreme Being, or giving divine honour to angels or other ministers of God, as inferior or middle deities betwixt the Supreme Being and us, as the Heathens thought their demons, whom therefore they called *Dii Mediozumi;* in neither of these senses can idolatry be applied to the three persons supposed to be in the divine nature. For, 1*st*, they are not creatures, nor, 2*dly*, any inferior deities, nor so supposed to be; but all equally to partake of the same one divine nature; as the three faculties do of the same one and indivisible soul. And therefore whatever mistake may be supposed in the hypothesis, yet it cannot come under any notion of idolatry. And no otherwise can the worship, or paying of divine honour, to the Son or Messiah (already proved) be excused from idolatry, than by acknowledging him to be the Word of God, (as you yourselves have called him,) that is, one of the divine persons in the Godhead. And this does avoid all notion of idolatry in the worship of him, and can no ways come under that prohibition of Deut. xiii. against worshipping of the false gods of the Heathen. You lay not this to the charge of your own Talmud and Rabbies, who give the same expositions of your Scriptures as we do. And you know how many of them do think, that a plurality of powers in the one nature of God is intimated in the very name of God *Ælohim*, which is the plural number; and in these texts, among many others of the Old Testament, (Gen. i. 1—26; iii. 22; xix. 24; Psalm xlv. 6, 7; lxviii. 18; cx. 1; Isa. ix. 6; xlviii. 16; Jer. xxiii. 6; Mich. v. 2; Zech. ii. 8, 9; iii. 2; xii. 10.) Now, may we not reason upon these texts, as you have done, without imputation of polytheism? And so of the texts in the Gospel? And when you come to embrace the Gospel, (God send it!) we will reason with you, as with some amongst ourselves, upon what proofs are there, answerable to, and explanatory of those texts in the Old Testament, which favour the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; and then, and not till then, will be the proper time to enter with you, at large, upon this controversy.

But what I have now said, I hope, will be sufficient to remove all scruple from you against the Gospel, from that text of Deut. xiii.

And then that other text (Deut. xviii. 19) will look very terribly upon you, that whoever should not hearken to the Messiah, when he came, God would require it of him. And you feel it severely, that God has required it.

3*d*, But, to put an end to this objection from Deut. xiii. The Jews have yielded it, if they will allow that learned Jew who disputed with Limborch to give their true sense; and that according to their own Talmud before quoted (tit. *de Synedrio,*) which says, "That any command may be transgressed by the command of a prophet," that is, who can work miracles to prove his mission.

And says that learned Jew, (Limbor. Col. p. 132,) "If Christ, after he rose from the dead, had publicly said to the whole congregation of Israel, Hear, O Israel, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and now have redeemed you from a greater captivity of sin; whom you have sacrilegiously put to death. *Absque dubio* (says he) without doubt, all Israel had believed, even to this present day. Nor had there been room left for any doubt or suspicion." Thus he; and he thereby yields, that such a miracle as this would have convinced all the Jews to believe Christ when he called himself God. And therefore he must grant, that, notwithstanding of what is said Deut. xiii. miracles are sufficient to vouch even the divinity of Christ. And then the dispute must only lie upon the miracles recorded in the Gospel. For the truth of which, I refer to what is said in the "Method with the Deists."

XI. I would in this place call upon you to reflect, how very exact and particular God has been in fulfilling all the promises he has made unto your nation; one especially, which does confound the Deists, who call for ocular demonstration, and have it, to their astonishment, in seeing at this day the fulfilling of a most wonderful prophecy and promise made to your nation, so many ages past.

The Deists have made you, of all people, their reproach, because you have been called the "peculiar people," "the holy nation," chosen of God before all nations upon the earth. Yet ye were "the fewest of all people," (Deut. vii. 7.) And they called you the most inconsiderable and contemptible; and thence argue (in their bold and profane style) the injustice and nonsense of God's preferring these to all the great nations and monarchies upon the earth.

They will not believe that God had more regard to the Jews than to any other people, or gave any prophecies concerning you. They say you coined those prophecies after the facts they speak of. But they demand the fulfilling of a prophecy which they may see. And this that I speak of is obvious to the eyes of all the world, it is recorded, Jer. xlvi. 28, "Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord; for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not utterly cut thee off." You will find the same, chap. xxx. 11. And chap. xxxi. 36, 37, it is written, "If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, if heaven above can be measured, and the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cut off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord." See the same repeated, chap. xxxiii. 24—26; and confirmed, Isai. xxvii. 7; xxix. 7, 8; liv. 9, 10; lxv. 8; Ezek. vi. 8; xi. 16; xii. 15, 16; Amos, ix. 8, 9; Zech. x. 9. And this was pursuant to what was promised in the law, Lev. xxvi. 44; Deut. iv. 31. &c.

Now let us see how literally this is fulfilled at this day. The great and famous monarchies, who, in their turns, governed the world, and successively had destroyed the Jews, (the Assyrian, the Babylonian, and the Roman) are all vanished as a dream; there is not one of them left; their very names are lost in the earth. But your nation, though "sifted among all nations" (as your prophet Amos expresses it, in the place above quoted) "like as corn is sifted in a sieve," yet are you preserved a visible distinct people, in all the nations whither you have been scattered. And the rage of many kings and governments have been let loose against you, to root you off from the face of the earth; and you had no helper. Yet the Lord was your helper, and put it out of the power of all the earth (though without any visible opposition) to infringe the promise he had made to you.

The Deists dare not say that these prophecies were made yesterday, or not before the fall of these monarchies; especially of the Roman, the greatest of them. And what a folly, as well as vanity, had it been in the Jews to have forged such audacious and provoking prophecies, to have thus dared all the powers of the earth to extirpate them, who hated them, and had them perfectly at mercy?

And here let the Deists take notice of this wonderful instance, fresh before their eyes, of God's particular regard to this most despised and contemptible people (in their account) above all the other nations of the earth, how great and honourable soever. This is a standing miracle, exhibited to the whole world!

Yet is there no partiality in this, as the Deists weakly reason; for as Moses was a type of the Messiah, so the church of the Jews was of the Christian; whose pales are enlarged to take in the Gentiles, as often promised in your prophets. By which means your nation was indeed a type of the whole world (represented in the long garment of the high priest, Wisd. xviii. 24; by Israel, called "the first-fruits of God's increase," Jer. ii. 3.) And consequently, the blessings of which the Jews partook, the promises made to them, and miraculous protection over them, was taking possession in the name, and securing the reversion of the Gentile world in the same glorious inheritance. And it was indifferent, as to the good of the world, which nation had been pitched upon as their type. But God chose the least, that his power and protection over his Church might be more visible; and to shew that she must struggle through many difficulties and tentations; yet never be extinct (though often distressed) when all the powers and glory of this world shall vanish as smoke before the wind.

Moreover, if God had chosen any of the great and powerful nations of the earth for his peculiar people, to whom, if he had given his promise to continue them for ever, the scorners would have blasphemed, and said, that God was still on the strongest side. And they would have ascribed their preservation to their own power and greatness. This is the reason God gives why he chose "the fewest of all people," (Deut. vii. 7; viii. 17,) lest they should say, it was through their own power and might that they were preserved. Besides, the peculiar nation being (as before has been said) a type of the Christian Church, it was necessary that the odds, as to the world, should be against that nation; which should subsist not by worldly strength and politics,

but by signal and miraculous providences. Thus the Church was best represented, as greatly distressed, but wonderfully preserved!

And here, O ye Jews, behold an equal promise of our Messiah to his Church, and as miraculously fulfilled as that before mentioned to yours. He promised, as before quoted, that his Church should continue "even unto the end of the world;" that he would be all that time with her, to preserve her, and that the gates of hell should never prevail against her. And when was this promised? Even at the beginning, when his religion was low and contemptible, hardly yet known in the world. And the devil has been let loose (as against Job) to spare only her life; all things else have been put in his power. All the rage and madness of kings, and states, and mobs, have been exerted against her, to destroy her, for many ages together. And she was destitute of all human help, nay, it was made unlawful for her to help herself, or take arms in her own defence against her persecuting kings, as it was not permitted to you, though an army of six hundred thousand men harnessed, besides a great mixed multitude, against Pharaoh, Ahasuerus, &c. (Exod. xii. 37, 38; xiii. 18.) But she was commanded, as you, only to "stand still and see the salvation of God, (xiv. 13, 14.) Yet still she insisted upon the promise of her preservation made to her by her Messiah; nay more, of her victory at last over all these her enemies; and boasted of it before them while they were worrying of her without control, and told them that it was not in their power to destroy her. Yet all this notwithstanding, how miraculously did our Jesus perform his promise, in his now almost seventeen hundred years preserving and supporting her under all her persecutions, and giving her victory and triumph; and she still trusts in that promise, that it can never fail. Could any power less than divine have foretold this preservation, and have effected it for so long a time, without human means, without sword or policy? This is not the least of the miracles which God has shewn, as to you, so to us, in these promises so full of wonder, so visibly fulfilled, and now every day fulfilling; and this is not a mean argument to join you to us, when you see the same God working so wonderfully for you and for us, for us only of all the whole earth, none of whom can boast such promises, and such performance, so incontestably true, and so truly miraculous. Therefore, I beseech you to hearken, at last, to the wise reasoning of your own Gamaliel, "lest ye be found fighters against God," (Acts, v. 38, 39.) For if this work had not been of God, it could not have so stood; you first spent your rage against this stone, which your builders refused, (Matt. xxi. 42, 44,) and as he foretold you, it has "grinded you to powder." Will you not yet confess, that "this is the Lord's doing," and that it is "marvellous in your eyes!"

And now, O ye people greatly beloved, and grievously punished, did your God ever fail you in any promise that ever he made to you? You are, and have been many centuries, preserved only upon the almighty power that there is in his promise; too strong for all the armed legions of earth and hell, which have overthrown mighty empires, and every thing else, but you, and his Church represented by you. Believe it, your preservation since your return from Babylon has been greater than in it, in Egypt, or in the wilderness. And can you imagine that he who has wrought so many miracles, and still continues them, lest any of his words should fall to the ground; can you think, that his great promise of the Messiah, and the time of his coming, so particularly described, is come to nought? As to the time, you confess it has failed, if not fulfilled in our Jesus; and where the time (as of your seventy years' captivity, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21; Jer. xxix. 20,) is named, there it is impossible that there should be a failure as to the time.

See how exactly your deliverance out of Egypt, (Exod. xii. 40, 41; Num. xiv. 34,) was fulfilled, even to a day of the promise made to you; and your forty years in the wilderness, to the forty days of your spying out of the land; nor did your many and repeated provocations all along that time, put off God's promise one day farther. See then and consider how punctually our Messiah's coming was according to the stated times and ages prefixed, as it is set down in the first chapter of our Gospel according to Saint Matthew, (ver. 17,) the generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations; from David to the captivity, fourteen generations; and from the captivity to Christ, fourteen generations; God's fixed and determinate times are not to be altered.

The time and place of the Messiah's coming, as foretold in the prophets, is one of the surest marks by which we must know him. To that end they were so particularly set down; and if these fail, so may all the rest.

How do you expect to know your Messiah when he does come? He cannot vouch himself from the time of his coming foretold by the prophets; for that is past, and there is no other time prefixed.

Will he prove his mission by miracles? and will he shew greater than our Jesus has done? Can he fulfill the prophecies of the Messiah, by not coming at the time they have named, so much as our Messiah, by fulfilling all the circumstances of the prophecies, as to time, place, &c.?

XII. Born of a virgin, (Isa. vii. 14,) of the seed of David, (xi. 10,) in the town of Beth-

lehem, (Micah, v. 2,) within four hundred and ninety years of the building of the second temple, (Dan. ix. 25,) before the sceptre had quite departed from Judah, (Gen. xlix. 10,) to whom the gathering of the Gentiles has been, as to their Messiah, as well as the Messiah of the Jews. This is an astonishing mark and notorious, and insisted upon over and over again in the prophets, (Psal. ii. 8; lxxii. 8, 11, 17; cx. 2; Isa. ii. 2; xi. 10; xlix. 6; lii. 15; lv. 5; lx. 3; lxv. 1; Zech. ix. 10; Hos. ii. 23.) And of which none that ever took upon them to be the Messiah, except only our Jesus, had the least shadow of a pretence. And consequential to this, that he should make the heathen nations forsake their idolatry, and destroy their idols, (Isa. ii. 18, 20; xxxi. 7; Ezek. xxx. 13; Zech. xiii. 1, 2.) No nation of the heathen was ever brought to this by the Law, but how many have by the Gospel? By the way, you may see, by this, how unreasonable your exception is against our Messiah from Deut. xiii. as if he introduced the worship of the heathen deities, which he only has effectually destroyed; he only stopt the mouths of their oracles, which within one hundred years after his coming were all totally silenced in the reign of Trajan. He only deposited his flesh in the grave, (Psal. xvi. 9, 10.) in hope that it should not see corruption. They gave him "gall to eat, and vinegar to drink," (lxix. 21.) They "pierced his hands and his feet," and "cast lots upon his vesture," (xxii. 16, 18.) They upbraided him in the same words foretold, (Matt. xxvii. 43.) His very price was foretold, and how the money should be disposed of, (Zech. xi. 13; Matt. xxvii. 6, 7;) that a bone of him should not be broken, (Exod. xii. 46; John, xix. 36.) Again, the particular manner of his riding into Jerusalem upon an ass, (Zech. ix. 9,) which your learned Rabbi Saadia expounds of the Messiah. As also the second, and hundred and tenth Psalms, and other scriptures before quoted. I could enlarge upon this head, and shew many more particulars wherein our Jesus did and does exactly answer to the several marks given of the Messiah by the prophets.

Which is so strong an argument, so past all possibility of cheat or contrivance, that the first of our apostles reckoned it even beyond miracles, or rather, as the greatest of miracles, greater than those shewn to our outward eyes. For, proving the mission of Jesus from their being eye-witnesses of his majesty, in his miraculous transfiguration; and the voice which then came to him from the excellent glory, "which voice (says he, 2 Pet. i. 16—19,) we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount;" he adds, as a yet farther proof, "We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." Pray God it may, and that he may "open your understanding," as he did of his apostles, (Luke, xxiv. 45,) "that they might understand the Scriptures, that thus it is written, and that thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." All which you see fulfilled, yet you will not believe it! You see all fulfilled that he foretold so particularly of the destruction of Jerusalem; and that that age in which he spoke, should not pass till it was fulfilled, though there was then no appearance of it.

XIII. What witchcraft then is it, what heavy judgment lies upon you, that you should harden your hearts against this Messiah, in expectation of another, in whom the prophecies of the Messiah can never meet — for the time is already past, as you yourselves confess — against this Messiah, who shed his blood for you, who died praying for you, who offered up himself a sacrifice to purchase eternal redemption for you, which the blood of bulls and goats could never do. The very institution of sacrifices does declare, that God would require satisfaction for the sins of men, and that without shedding of blood there could be no remission; not of blood less noble than our own, but of the great Messiah, of dignity and merit sufficient to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And now I appeal to yourselves, whether this scheme of God, in Christ, reconciling to himself lapsed humanity, and thus triumphing over all the powers and malice of that serpent the devil, who seduced man into disobedience, be not more worthy of God; a demonstration of greater power, and wisdom, and goodness, and a more literal fulfilling of that first promise of the Messiah, (Gen. iii. 15,) than giving to any one nation (though it were your own) the conquest over your enemies, and a temporal reign upon earth.

Yet this is the objection you have against your second Moses, as against the first, "Where is the inheritance of fields and vineyards that was promised to us?" (Num. xvi. 14.) You hanker after these poor perishing things, and neglect your eternal inheritance, which was figured by them; you long more after an earthly than a heavenly Canaan, and for a little rest there, than a rest for ever; therefore you reject our spiritual, and choose to yourselves an earthly and fighting Messiah. But you cannot have him; and God, in mercy, has turned you out of your beloved Canaan, and given it to the basest of men, to take off your minds from it, and to instruct you that that is not the end of his promise. And because you prefer it to the glorious purchase that our Messiah has made for us, which the

angels desire to look into; but ye think "scorn of that pleasant land," where there is everlasting victory, and triumph, and sabbath, and jubilee! Oh shut not your eyes wilfully against your own happiness; call it to mind, and shew yourselves men. Is not this a more exalted and rational completion and archetype of your law, than the tables of municipal statutes, to distinguish you for some short time from other people? if that be all the import (as you would have it) of the whole glorious dispensation to Moses. Was this worth or proportionable to that astonishing appearance upon Mount Sinai, and all that wonderful economy of miracles, by which your law was established? But if you will look, with us, to the end of your law, then you will see every tittle and iota of your law fulfilled, exalted, glorified, in the heavenly reign of our Messiah, the second Adam—the innocent Isaac that was sacrificed—the Joseph that was sold by his brethren for their future preservation—the Moses who delivers us out of Egypt, the slavery and thraldom of sin and hell, and conducts us safe through the wilderness, the tentations and distresses of this wretched life—our Joshua, who opens our way into the heavenly Canaan, through faith in whose blessed passion and sacrifice for us, when lifted up upon the cross like the brazen serpent in the wilderness, the mortal biting of our spiritual serpent the devil is cured, and our souls eternally saved. These are the glorious things that were shewn to Moses in the Mount, (Exod. xxv. 40,) after which pattern he was commanded to frame the tabernacle, and all the institutions thereof, as types and shadows of those things which were to be perfected in the heavens, "by faith in which the just shall live," (Hab. ii. 4.) And will you now reject the pattern for the types? will you degrade your law, to mean nothing beyond the outward senses? nothing but what is visible and temporary? to have no spiritual and eternal signification? "Do we therefore make void the law? yea, we establish the law." We carry it whither it was intended, we shew an eternal and heavenly light shining through it all, and every institution of it. We look with reverence and great veneration upon it, as the schoolmaster that was ordained to bring us unto Christ, as the ladder that was set to climb up into heaven. But you will not climb with us: you say that the top does not reach to heaven, therefore you stop short upon the lower steps. The patriarchal dispensation before the flood was one step; the Abrahamical another; the Mosaical another; and you still expect another, the last, and most perfect, under the Messiah; yet you reject it, now it is come; and there is to be no other.

Be not afraid to lose your Law or your Prophets: you will hear them read every day in our churches, and their true and full import explained and fulfilled in the Gospel. For the Gospel is the best comment upon the Law, and the Law is the best expositor of the Gospel; they are like a pair of indentures, they answer in every part, their harmony is wonderful, and is of itself a conviction. No human contrivance could have reached it; there is a divine majesty and foresight in the answer of every ceremony and type to its completion; and there is one yet to be completed,—oh the glorious day when that shall come! — that is, the grafting you in again to your own olive tree, the fatness, the sweet, the marrow of your law fulfilled in the Messiah; for we do believe, (Rom. xi. 25, 26, &c.) "that blindness is happened to Israel, but in part, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so that all Israel shall be saved. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; God hath concluded all," us first, and then you, "in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," that the praise may be to God, and not to us, that no flesh should glory in his presence. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! for of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

XIV. But though the judgments of God are in themselves unsearchable, yet they generally move in the road of second causes: and so far it is lawful for us to look into them; and sometimes necessary in order to our duty, as being not only brought upon us for our sins, but continued by them; so that by discovering the causes we may prevent or shorten our judgments.

Therefore I would here inquire a little into some of those most visible causes, which have all this time, and do still harden the Jews in their obstinacy against receiving the doctrine of Christ.

And some of these are on the Jews' side, and some on the Christian.

1*st*, First for the Jews. They have, since Christ came, quite altered their own doctrine and topics from whence they used to argue before, on purpose to avoid the plain proofs thence drawn for our Jesus being the Messiah. To instance in a few:

1. There are great presumptions that they have altered and corrupted the very text of their own Scriptures of the Old Testament, in those places which speak of the Messiah, which gave the marks of him, and pointed out the time of his coming. However, this they cannot deny, that whether by the loss of the vowels in the Hebrew tongue, or from whatever cause, that language is now rendered so uncertain beyond any other in the world, as that one word bears many different significations, insomuch that every text almost will

afford perpetual jangling, which has made some of your most learned Rabbies complain, that your Scriptures are become, in the words of the prophet before quoted, as "a book sealed up" to you: and that the true sense of them will not be known till the coming of the Messiah, who will restore the vowels and right knowledge of the Hebrew tongue.

It is long since the Hebrew has ceased to be the vulgar language of your nation; and consequently to be well understood by the Jews themselves, who now learn it at schools, as other men do. Josephus complains of the loss of the Hebrew tongue among the Jews in his time; and it was so, long before.

This occasioned that the Greek translation of the Seventy was publicly read in the Jewish synagogues, many years before the coming of Christ.

This translation they thought to have been divinely inspired; and made great boasts of it, as you may read in Josephus, and many other of your authors. And it continued in this reputation with you, and was read in your synagogues, till Christ came, and for about an hundred years after. Then you rejected it, because of the plain proofs that were brought out of it for our Jesus being the Messiah, and set up the spurious Greek translation of Aquila, who was a heathen, a Christian, and a Jew, which he then made when the Hebrew tongue was so greatly decayed from that purity which it confessedly retained when your Seventy priests made that famous translation for Ptolemy, king of Egypt, about three hundred years before Christ, and was never questioned by any of you, but held in the highest veneration all that time, till after the coming of our Saviour, because of the flagrant testimonies it bore to him. And were it now admitted, as it formerly was amongst you, and as it truly is, the best comment, at least upon the Hebrew text, to determine the sense of it when the words are doubtful, and (because of the present defect in that language) of various and different significations; I say, if this were admitted, (which you cannot refuse, without casting reproach upon all your predecessors for three hundred years before Christ, who did admit it, and upon yourselves for so doing, and confessing that you have done it unreasonably,) you would not be able to maintain your hold against Christianity. Are not the quotations of your Scriptures which are in your learned Philo, (who lived in the days of Christ and his apostles,) and of others your chief Rabbies before that time, more according to the translation of the Seventy than of the Hebrew text, as you have it at present? And what reason can you give, why you dare not quote that translation still? but because it renders the sense of the Hebrew so, as leads it directly upon our Saviour, and cannot be extended farther; and it cuts off those vain and precarious excuses, which you would draw from the present uncertainty of the Hebrew text. Yet none of your later expositions can pretend to any authority equal to that of the Seventy, even yourselves being the judges! This shews that you are not disposed to find out the truth, but bent to shut the door against it.

2. As the Jews have thus manifestly stood out against the conviction of the Holy Scriptures, by inventing and using these arts to corrupt them, at least to hide and obscure their true meaning; so have they, for the same reason, namely, in prejudice to our Messiah, altered their former principles and notions, which they had received by tradition from their fathers. Thus, finding that the notion of the Λόγος, or Word of God, which was universally received amongst the Jews before Christ came, and largely insisted upon by Philo, that learned Jew, even in the apostolical age, that, as before has been noted, he was God, and yet a distinct person from God the Father of all; that he was Χαρακτὴρ, the express image of God; the great Δύναμις, instrument or power by which God made the worlds; the Ἀρχιερεὺς, supreme archetypal High Priest and Mediator betwixt God and men; of whom the high priest under the law was a type and figure; by outward communion with whom, men were made capable of, and had a title to the inward and spiritual communion with the Λόγος, and by him of reconciliaton and acceptance with God. From this notion of the Λόγος, Saint John disputes, according to the received principles of that age; and having proved Christ to be the Λόγος, he in his Gospel, Epistles, and Revelation, gives him the titles which were usually ascribed to the Λόγος, of light, and life, and truth; and from having communion with him, infers that we have also communion with the Father. But the Jews, finding that these principles led directly to the divinity of our Saviour, and all that is said of him in the Gospel, presently forsook their own principles, and as early as Justin Martyr began to deny them, as Trypho the Jew did, and put Justin upon the proof of the Λόγος being a divine person, &c. which he did out of Philo, and other approved authors of the Jews.

It is plain that the Jews thus understood it, when they accused our Saviour of blasphemy, and of making himself God, because he called himself the Son of God, (John, x. 33, 36.) For they called themselves the sons of God, in a large sense, as so adopted, and in fœderal covenant with God; but they knew it was the received notion among them, that the manner how the Λόγος was the Son or Word of God, was natural, as proceeding from the nature of God; and that for any to call himself the Son of God, in this sense, was to make himself God. Whence

it is plain that they thought the Λόγος to be God.

3. The Jews, finding that the mystical and primary sense of their law did refer to the Messiah, and were most exactly and particularly fulfilled and completed in our Saviour, rather than be convinced by this, they have now (as the learned Jew that disputed with Limborch, p. 62, et alibi,) denied that the law was typical, or referred to any more perfect state. The contrary of which is plainly intimated Exod. xxv. 40, from whence our apostle convincingly argues, Heb. viii. 5. But the Jews now will have no type in the law, or the office of the Messiah to extend beyond temporal conquests, to any spiritual or heavenly acquisitions, sticking in the bare letter of the law.

But Philo, and the Jews before him, did largely insist upon the mystical, which they made the principal end and intendment of the law; as indeed it is, and most apparently so, if we duly consider the law itself, and the prophets, who often mind us of it; and without which they cannot be verified, (as before is shewn;) and their meaning runs low and contemptible, no way answering the magnificence and glories which are there revealed.

Jacob confessed himself and his fathers to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth, (Gen. xlvii. 9.) Whence our apostle does argue very forcibly, (Heb. xi. 14, 15, 16,) "That they who say such things declare plainly, that they seek a country; and truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned, but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." If the land of Canaan had been all their view, and they had understood the promise made to them of Canaan to have had no farther meaning than the letter, only the temporal enjoyment of that pleasant country, they needed not have wandered from it, as they did; or they might have had opportunity to have returned to it.

When David was in possession and king of it, he declared himself to be then in a pilgrimage, and a stranger in it, (1 Chron. xxix. 15.)

This shews they had a farther prospect, and that they extended the promise made to them of Canaan, to mean principally and ultimately the heavenly Canaan; of which they understood the earthly Canaan only as a type. And if Canaan itself was a type, no doubt Jerusalem must be so too, and the temple, with all the service of it; that is, all your law.

Your Cabala makes your outward law but the *cortex* or shell of the hidden mysteries that are contained in it.

Yet you are now grown to that violent prejudice against this (though you would stick to your Cabala too, and think it divinely inspired) because it leads directly upon Christianity, that your learned Jew has set up this principle, (Limbor. Col. N. xi. xii. p. 118, 120,) "Quod cultus externus, ut talis, est interno multo perfectior;" and as a just consequence of this, "Quod externus non minus Deo gratus quam internus;" that is, "That the outward worship, as such, is much more perfect than the internal," and therefore, "That the outward worship is not less grateful to God than the internal." These are the titles of his chapters; and the end of setting up these desperate positions is, to obviate the Christian argument, that the inward and spiritual worship is chiefly regarded by God, and consequently the inward and spiritual meaning of the law is much preferable to the letter and outward observances; that therefore there is a spiritual sense in the law, which exceeds the letter, or which is typified by it; that this is fulfilled in Christ, who has thereby consummated and perfected the law. To oppose this, the Jews are driven to that extremity, as here you see, to prefer the outward worship, as such, to the inward; contrary to the tenor of their own law, and their prophets, where the inward circumcision of the heart is so often inculcated and preferred to that outward in the flesh. Nay, the outward institutions of the law, where the inward and spiritual meaning and intendment of them is not regarded, are declared to be hateful and abomination to God, (Isa. i. 11—21.) The inward is not only preferred, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings," (Hos. vi. 6.) "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but, mine ears hast thou opened," (Psal. xl. 6.) But, in respect to the inward, the outward are said not to have been commanded by God, (Jer. vii. 22, 23;) that is, they were commanded for the sake of the inward, and therefore, without respect to the inward, the outward were not commanded.

To rid you out of this perplexity, your learned Jew has advanced a strange sort of an argument to maintain his paradox before mentioned of preferring the outward, as such, to the inward worship and sense of the law, where he explains his foresaid position thus,—that the outward is not to be supposed without the inward; and that the outward, as including the inward, is preferable to the inward: but this, instead of solving the case, makes no case at all of it; it is no more than this, whether two be not more than one? whether both outward and inward be not more than the inward alone? which nobody will dispute with him. But then this cuts off all comparison betwixt the outward and the inward, and consequently makes no sense of those texts before mentioned, and many others, where the same comparison is insisted upon. And when the Jew says, that the

outward, as such, is preferable, &c. what does he mean by *as such?* is it, the outward, as outward? which any one would take to be the meaning; but his meaning, as he explains it, is, the outward as such, that is, as both outward and inward.

So very thin and contradictory are these strained excuses you have set up against the spiritual, which is the main and principal intendment of your law, because it cannot be fulfilled but only in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his spiritual kingdom.

4. The modern Jews have, since Christ's time, gone away from the constant tradition of their fathers before Christ came, namely, that the Messiah would shew himself to the world, and vouch his commission by miracles (John, vii. 31,) of which sufficient has been said before. And that this contrivance discovers plainly their guilt, that it is not conviction which they want, but that they are resolved not to be convinced.

5. They have not only departed from the traditions of their fathers; but they have invented new and strange conceits, of which their fathers, before Christ came, never dreamt. As of two Messiahs, the one a suffering, the other a triumphing Messiah; to answer those two states of suffering and triumphing, which were told of the Messiah, and both fulfilled in our blessed Saviour. To avoid which, the Jews, since his time, have invented these two Messiahs. The Jews in our Saviour's time, even the apostles themselves, till after his resurrection, had not the true notion of the sufferings of the Messiah, much less of his death. When he spoke of it, his disciples rebuked him, and understood nothing of it, (Matt. xvi. 22; Luke, xviii. 34.) And the Jews told him, (John, xii. 34,) "We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up?" that, is crucified. They were looking out then, as you are now, for a temporal fighting Messiah, who should "restore again the kingdom to Israel, (Acts, i. 6.) They thought not then of the sufferings of the Messiah, (Luke, xxiv. 26.) Far less did they dream of two Messiahs, one to suffer, the other to conquer. You can shew no footstep of any such doctrine amongst the Jews before Christ came. And it shews the distress your latter Rabbies were driven to, when they could find no shift but so groundless and foolish an invention, which is of a piece with your other fulsome and ridiculous legends before mentioned, of the Messiah's sitting these sixteen hundred years amongst the lepers at the gates of Rome; that he is in paradise, but tied in a woman's hair, that he cannot come; the mad and nonsensical stories of your behemoth and leviathan; of God's weeping when your city was destroyed; of his daily study in the reading of your law, and such other delirious fancies, as shew the greatness of your judgment, threatened 2 Thess. ii. 11, and visibly fulfilled upon you, more than upon any people, God sending "you strong delusion, that you should believe" such monstrous, and even contradictory "lies, because ye received not the truth, that ye might be saved, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," in such rabbinical and shameless fopperies, they deserved not to be called forgeries, on purpose to elude the infallible demonstrations which our Jesus gave of his being the Messiah. These are the great, though pitiful obstacles, on the Jews' side, which hinder their embracing of Christianity.

2*d*, I come now to other obstacles, which lie on the Christian side.

1. The learned Jew that disputes with Limborch, (Collat. p. 102,) complains of the great scandal given to the Jews in the Popish countries, by the idolatry which they see practised there. They cannot bear to see the great God painted like an old man in their churches and mass books, in their shops and houses, and publicly sold by allowance; this they take to be the sin so strictly prohibited, Deut. iv. 15, 16, and in many other Scriptures, besides their worshipping of saints, angels, &c.—See Sandys' *Speculum Europæ*.

There is another strange sort of impediment which the Jews have met with in Popish countries, that is, that if any of them turned Christians, they forfeited all their estates, on pretence that they or their ancestors had got them by usury. Of this, several good men in the Church of Rome have complained, as Bradwardinus, l. 1. *De causa Dei.* chap. 1. Coroll. part. xxxii. *Cardinalis a S. Severina in Catechismo Generali pro Catechum*, chap. xx. Gasparus Belga, a Jesuit, in *Epist. Ormutina* (*est inter Epistolas Indicas*) wrote an. 1549, speaking of one Rabbi Solomon, who desired baptism, says, that he, and many others, would have embraced Christianity, if it had not been for that law among the Christians, that they should be obliged to restore whatever they had got by usury. This I have taken out of Hornbeck *contra Judæos*, Lugd. Batav. an. 1655, in Prolegom. p. 31, where he cites more authorities. As of Joh. Gerson, apud Bochellum, tit. *de Judæis.* And amongst us, Edwin Sandys, *de Statu Relig.* cap. xli. Georgius Theodorus, *de Statu Judæorum in Repub. Christian.* cap. ix. he says, that this custom was taken away by a particular bull of Pope Paul III. by the Council of Basil, sess. xix. and of Lateran, under Alexander III. c. 26. How it is at this day at Rome, in Spain, Portugal, and other Popish countries, I cannot tell; but Sir Edwin Sandys, in his book before quoted, wrote an. 1599, says that when he was in Italy, the same forfeitures were still exacted of the Jewish converts, except where

the Pope gave dispensation ; which he knew granted only to some few physicians, their gains not being supposed as got by usury. But it stopt the conversion of others.

2. I come now to the Reformed Churches, where the Jews meet with neither of these forementioned impediments, but whither many Jews do come out of the Popish countries, as the learned Jew confesses to Limborch, on purpose to avoid the idolatry in the Church of Rome, to which many of them are forced to comply, to save their lives or estates ; and others are tempted to it, and counterfeit Christianity for the sake of preferments, especially in Spain and Portugal, as before has been told ; and whence many of them do fly into Holland, where there is universal liberty of conscience, and that they may profess and practise their Judaism openly. This has brought so many of them into Holland, more than to other of the countries called reformed.

1. But there is another sort of impediment which they meet with there, that is, the various sects, which are tolerated and owned as churches, though most opposite and contradictory to one another. This goes violently athwart the fixed and stated principle of the *segullah* or *peculium*, which God delivered to the Jews from the beginning, and implies the true notion of a church, as being a *peculium* or select society, gathered from amongst the rest of mankind ; under governors and laws, with promises and privileges of their own, peculiar to themselves, and independent of all others upon the earth. Now, the Jews cannot think this *segullah* transferred to a Christian church, where there is no notion of any *segullah* at all, or such a lame one as admits and excludes nobody. A park without pales! which reduces the Church from a society to a sect ; only to believe such things, without being subject to the governors or laws of the society ; without any principle of unity. A Church without a bishop! a body without a head! This latitudinarian no-principle is so perfectly adverse to the received notion of the Jews all along, that they can as easily believe no faith as no Church ; and can never think their faith terminated or fulfilled in that Church, whose constitution is not framed alike to theirs ; for how otherwise was theirs a type of ours? A *type* is so called from its likeness to what it does represent. And what resemblance is there betwixt the Church in Jerusalem under one High Priest, and in Holland, where Episcopacy, of which that was the image, is abolished? What agreement betwixt the temple, into which none were admitted but proselytes to the constitution as well as faith of the Jews, and that Church, whose doors are open to all comers and goers, which has no communion by admitting of all communions, and makes no communion necessary? How was the one altar of the Jewish Church, a type of altar against altar in every parish? of one hundred opposite altars, that is, communions, at Amsterdam, yet all acknowledged to belong to the Christian Church? It is true, opposite communions may agree in many things, as all do in some things ; but how they can be called one Church, is as difficult for a Jew to apprehend, as a church without a communion, that is, a society which has no society. A church and not a *peculium*, is an open enclosure ; and a society without government is as great a contradiction. And other government than monarchical in the Church, the Jews never understood, nor did God ever appoint. Not that all churches in the world should have one visible and universal head upon earth ; more than all the kingdoms of the earth are to have one universal monarch under God, to whom the whole world is one kingdom, though composed of many different and independent kingdoms ; as the one Catholic Church may consist of many independent churches, which all make one Church to Christ. Of each of these under her own bishop, the Church of the Jews at Jerusalem (being itself a particular church) was a type, under her high priest. And as he was a type of Christ, the Λόγος, the archetypal and universal High Priest and Bishop of the Catholic Church, so the Church of the Jews may be called a type also of the universal Church, as that nation was a type of the whole world ; of which the high priest wore a representation, as well as of the *segullah*, as before has been observed from Wisd. xviii. 24. For God is King of all the earth ; though more especially of his Church.

The miraculous performance of that promise of perpetuity which God made to the nation of the Jews, has been discoursed before. But here I would take notice of one great means by which it has been brought to pass ; which is the strict notion that the Jews still retain of the *segullah*. Those many myriads of them who at first went over to Christianity, found as strict a notion of the *segullah* there, and saw how it was transferred, as from the beginning it was intended, from the *segullah* of Moses, to that of the Messiah. It was indeed but the same church or *segullah* under different economies or dispensations. But those whose eyes were blinded that they saw not this, remained in their infidelity, and stuck to their old *segullah* ; and God, who brings good out of evil, has made this a means, the great means, of keeping them a distinct people to this day : for should the Jews turn so much Latitudinarians, as to lose this notion of the *segullah*, and grow indifferent in their rites and customs—if they should intermarry with the nations whither they are scattered, and conform to their customs and manners, they would soon lose both their name and

religion, and by being mixed with the rest of the world, grow undistinguished from them, as a river when it is emptied into the ocean.

If it be objected, that then the foresaid promise of God would be broken, of preserving them for ever a distinct people ; and therefore, that this promise stands in the way against their conversion :

I answer, that it did not stand in the way against their conversion in the beginning of Christianity ; for the Jews who then turned Christians, did not at all for that lose their name and nation ; and they were plainly distinguished from the converts of the Gentiles, (Acts, vi. 1 ; xxi. 25.)

To make this more clearly understood, let us consider, that when Christ first sent forth his apostles, their commission was limited to the Jews only, in the strictest sense, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not ; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," (Matt. x. 5, 6.) Here the Samaritans, though Jews, are excluded, because they were schismatics, and not strictly within the *segullah*. And thus it continued all Christ's lifetime. The Gospel went not without the pale of the *segullah*. After Christ's resurrection, then he extended their commission farther, and bade them "Go and preach among all nations," but still "beginning at Jerusalem," (Luke, xxiv. 47,) to shew that there the Christian *segullah* was first established, and derived from thence, as from the root, to spread among all nations. But it appears not that the apostles, even long after that time, understood the full extent of this their commission ; for till the vision of the sheet, (Acts, x.) Peter himself did not know that the Gentiles were capable of being admitted into the Christian *segullah* ; of which he was convinced by a great miracle then shewn in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius, &c. which satisfied the rest of the Church, who contended with him for his preaching to the Gentiles, (Acts, xi.) So that till this time, the Christian *segullah* consisted of none but of the Jews only : into which the Gentile proselytes were afterwards admitted, even as into the Jewish *segullah* under the law. Christ foretold the future calling of the Gentiles, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," said Christ to the Jews, (John, x. 16.) And signified to them that the Gentile converts should at last be made equal to them, and in some respects be preferred before them, in that parable of those called at the eleventh hour, (Matt. xx.) And that the first called should be last, and the last first. He shewed likewise that his mercy extended even to the Gentiles, by his compassion to the woman of Canaan. But at the same time he asserted the prerogative of the *segullah* or Church of the Jews, whom he calls the children, in comparison of whom the Gentiles were but dogs, (Matt. xv. 26,) that is, out of the *segullah* (as it it is expressed, Rev. xxii. 15,) "I am not sent," said Christ to her, "but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," that is, the *segullah* was to be set up only with them, to whom only he himself preached ; the Gentiles were to come in only as proselytes to the Jews, and that not by the ministry of Jesus himself, but only of his apostles, after his ascension. In all things the preference was given to the Jews ; and the Christian *segullah* was first fixed among them. They are "the natural branches," (Rom. xi. 24.) Theirs is Christ, the apostles, and first Christian Church. And we freely confess, as our blessed Lord has taught us, (John, iv. 22,) that "salvation is of the Jews." He revealed not himself to the Gentiles, he would not answer a word to Herod or Pontius Pilate, (Luke, xxiii. 9 ; Matt. xxvii. 14,) but he declared himself expressly to your high priest and Sanhedrim, (xxvi. 64.) He did good to all, even to the Gentiles, and healed their sick. His mercy is over all his works, but much more eminently to his Church, his *segullah*. The children's meat is reserved only for them, there only it is to be had ; therefore all are invited to go thither for it. All are capable of being adopted children, by their admission into the *segullah*, and the children who forsake it, or are justly turned out of it, fall to the condition of dogs, "for without are dogs."

The twelve apostles were chosen with respect to the *segullah* of the twelve tribes. Our Saviour himself makes the allusion, when he said to them, (Matth. xix. 28.) "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And the names of the twelve tribes are described as written upon the twelve gates of the new Jerusalem, (Rev. xxi. 12, 14,) and answering thereunto, the names of the twelve apostles upon the twelve foundations. Then the calling of the Gentiles after the Jews, was in the like manner signified in the number of the seventy whom our Lord ordained some time after the apostles, (Luke, x. 1.) For the Jews divided the world into seventy nations, there being just so many sons of Shem, Ham, and Japheth recorded in the tenth of Genesis, who are said to be divided after their tongues and after their nations. Thence the Jews conclude that there were seventy nations and seventy languages, the languages distinguishing the nations, because each sorted to those of his own language, and so those of each language made a distinct nation. It would be hard otherwise to conjecture how the world should be divided into several nations, without such a force and necessity put upon them, and leading them, I may say, irresistibly into it, by the miraculous division of languages ; for we cannot very easily suppose, that the whole

world should meet together, to canton it out into several nations, by a free and equal vote, and to number out who, and how many should belong to each nation, and to name all the kings or governors of each nation, as it is done in the tenth of Genesis.

Now, the Jews believe that this division of the world into seventy nations was done by God, with a particular respect to his *segullah* to be afterwards set up in Israel ; whose sons that descended with him into Egypt, are recorded, Gen. xlvi. and are just seventy. They think this to be intimated, Deut. xxxii. 8, where it is said, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel ;" and ver. 7 shews this to have been a tradition of the Jews in the days of Moses.

Therefore, as our blessed Saviour sent out at first twelve apostles, with respect to the twelve tribes, and limited them to preach to none other, so did he afterwards appoint other seventy also, with respect to the other nations of the world, who were in time to be brought into the *segullah*. And it is observable, that in the commission given to the seventy, (Luke, x.) there is no such restriction as is given to the twelve, (Matth. x. 5,) of not going to the Gentiles, or Samaritans ; though the door was not fully opened to the Gentiles till the vision of the sheet, (Acts, x.) as before has been said.

After this, the Gentiles came in abundantly to the *segullah ;* but the first Christian Church was wholly of the Jews, and established in Jerusalem ; whose bishop did answer to the High Priest, and was the principle of unity to the Christian Jews, as the High Priest was to the other. So that the *segullah* was preserved entire, only transferred from the Jewish high priest to the Jewish bishop. It was not the Gentiles who converted the Jews to Christianity, but the Jews converted the Gentiles, and the Gentiles came in to the Christian Jewish Church, and appealed to it upon all occasions, (Acts, xv.) And thus it continued till after the destruction of Jerusalem. But the name of Jews seems to have been appropriated to the infidel Jews, upon their many and notorious rebellions under their several false Messiahs, in which the Christian Jews were not concerned, nor in the punishments and odium which thereupon followed, and the laws that were made against the Jews ; and so by degrees came to lose the name of Jews, and become undistinguished from the Gentile Christians : for then the name of Jew grew by custom to be a discrimination of religion, and not only of a nation. So that when a Jew now turns a Christian, he is no longer called a Jew.

But when the time shall come (God send it!) that there will be a general conversion of the Jews, then there will be no reason to take from them the name of Jews ; that name will then only distinguish their nation. And it will then, no doubt, be the most honourable of any upon the earth : "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers ; and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came," (Rom. ix. 4, 5.)

Then it will no longer be thought a reproach in Spain and Portugal, to own that they are (as before has been quoted from the learned Jew) descended of the race of the Jews, and to take that name upon themselves ; and other nations will strive for the same privilege. Then may be fulfilled, even literally, what is written, (Isaiah, xliv. 5,) "One shall say, I am the Lord's ; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." And thus the name and nation of the Jews will be magnified and exalted above all that are upon the face of the earth, and perpetuated, according to the forementioned promise of God, while sun and moon shall endure ; and then, when "the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in," the Jews will be the head and not the tail ; and as God has promised you, (Deut. xxviii. 1, 13,) "Thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath. And the Lord thy God shall set thee on high, above all the nations of the earth."

Then shall the ten tribes appear ; who now perhaps are the greatest monarchies upon earth, and then will be acknowledged as such.

See what a glorious state of your nation depends upon your conversion ! And it may be more glorious than all this that I have said, even all that temporal grandeur and empire which you expect ; though when all that is done, it comes infinitely short of the heavenly and eternal glories which our Messiah has purchased for us, and of which all these earthly greatnesses are, in their utmost extent, but faint types and shadows ; and therefore far from the primary and ultimate intendment of the law, which is already fulfilled in the spiritual conquests and reign of our Messiah over all the powers of hell and death.

I take not upon me to determine, that the preservation of the name and nation of the Jews, upon their conversion, will be just as I have said. But this we may depend upon, that the promise of God will be fulfilled, and that he will never want means to bring it to pass. And therefore, that the conversion of the Jews will be no hinderance to the perpetuating of their name and nation, as he has promised.

And let their conversion begin (*cum bono Deo*) in this church and nation; where the good providence of God has prepared the way, by freeing you Jews here from those obstacles which obstruct your way in other Christian countries. Here you see no images or pictures of the great God in our churches, nothing in our worship which you can call idolatry or superstition, (Hierom *ad Evagr.*) Here you may see an episcopacy, presbyters, and deacons, answerable to your high priest, priests, and Levites: and the *segullah* of the temple perpetuated and continued in the church; in which, as in the temple, and now in your synagogues, the public service and worship of God is celebrated in the vulgar language of the nation, with the solemnity and gravity of a well composed and digested liturgy. And lastly, here are no forfeitures or mulcts upon you for your acknowledging and returning to your true Messiah; but you may reasonably presume, that all due encouragement will be given to you towards so glorious a change; and to convince you, that we seek not yours but you. The Lord open your eyes.

2. Let me add, that you will be here free from another great scandal, which you have met with more frequently in Holland, that is, Socinianism, to which some that opposed you there made too near approaches; and if they had converted you, it had not been to Christianity, but rather to idolatry, in paying divine honours and adoration to Christ, while they suppose him but a creature, (*Racov. Catech.* sect. 6. c. 1;) and they deny any to be Christians who refuse this divine adoration and invocation to Christ, whereby they have excluded all our English Unitarians (as the Socinians here call themselves) from being Christians, who deny this to Christ, though they (sometimes, when they boast of their antiquity and universality,) derive themselves from these transmarine Socinians, and pretend to be of one faith with them; but your learned Jew before mentioned argues against them, that Christ could not be the heavenly king, unless he were God himself, (whatever the Socinians dream to the contrary,) because that no mere creature could be present and exist every where. "Non potest esse rex cælestis, nisi fuerit Deus ipse (quidquid Sociniani contrarium somniaverint) etenim nulla pura creatura potest ubique assistere et providere," (Limborch, Coll. p. 69.) This vast prejudice you will likewise avoid in the Church of England, where these Socinian heresies, on both sides, are detested and exploded.

If you take scandal that such differences should be amongst those who call themselves Christians, remember that your Sadducees denied the resurrection, and both angels and spirits, (Acts, xxiii. 8,) which takes away the future state of heaven; and this you now believe, and make it a great article of your creed, (Limborch, Coll. p. 105,) and say, that it was always the faith of the Jews. Therefore you cannot object it against us, that there should be divisions, even in fundamental points, and schisms amongst us, since there has been the same amongst yourselves, your Samaritans, Sadducees, &c. and you will not think that this hurts the truth to those who hold it.

3. There is yet one great and the master difficulty of all, that stops the way to your conversion, which I have reserved to consider by itself in this last place, because it is the foundation of all those that lie on your side; and which, if clearly removed, will complete your conversion so far, as to leave you no other defence but plain obstinacy. It is that loose and precarious account which you give of the ground and foundation of your faith, on purpose to avoid that demonstration which there is for the truth of the Gospel, and, as said before, there is the same for the truth of the Law; but you will rather quit that irrefragable and sure foundation, and lose the certainty of your Law, than yield to the same or greater certainty that there is for the Gospel; or otherwise you have not yet known the true foundation upon which you ought to stand.

For the learned Jew before mentioned (Limborch, Coll. p. 130) establishes the faith of the Jews, not upon any grounds of certainty of which other men may judge besides the Jews, which are common to all men, and stand upon the general reason and conviction of mankind, but only upon the credit they are to give to their fathers, not as men, but as their fathers, and as they stand in that particular relation to them; for God (says he) "does not send us to the Gentiles, to ask of them, but bids us ask only of our fathers, and give full credit to them. And therefore," (continues he,) "if the tradition of our fathers told us the same of Moses, as it does of Christ, that is, that those matters of fact which are written of him in the law were not so done as he there tells, we should as little believe Moses, or what he wrote, as we do the Gospel; which we disbelieve for the same reason, namely, because our fathers tell us, that those things related in the Gospel were not so done as is there related."

Ans. 1. Your fathers have not told you so: they have confessed to the matters of fact recorded in the Gospels. Nor can you deny them without joining with the Deists against all revelations whatsoever, as well those made to Moses as those given by Christ. Your fathers indeed said, that Christ wrought wonderful works by the power of Beelzebub; but that is confessing to the matter of fact, and may be objected against the miracles of Moses

or any other whatsoever ; which is before considered, p. 5, &c.

But as your fathers, who believed not in Christ when he came, could not, nor did they deny the matters of fact of Christ ; and so gave the strongest sort of evidence, that of enemies, to the truth of them, and consequently to the truth of his doctrine, which they were brought to vouch : so, as before is told, (p. 20,) many myriads of your fathers did embrace his doctrine, and, by the computation there made, there must be many more myriads of their posterities than of the infidel Jews. So that here the question is not betwixt the tradition of your fathers, and of the Gentiles, but of those of your fathers who did believe, and those who did not believe in Christ ; for Christianity is nothing else but a tradition of the Jews, to which the Gentiles did come in. For, as shewn before, the first Christian Church was wholly Jewish, without any mixture of the Gentiles for a considerable time.

Now, then, since you have the tradition of your fathers on both sides, what method are you to take? What method did you take in the contrary traditions of the ten tribes, which grew among them in succeeding ages after their defection to idolatry under Jeroboam ? Your learned Jew gives a good rule, (Limborch, Collat. N. v. p. 138. 140,) namely, to recur to the original pretended of each tradition, and there see upon what foundation it began. That of Moses was grounded upon miracles exhibited before all the people : not so of Jeroboam, who pretended no such thing ; only to give a different exposition of the Law of Moses to countenance his idolatry ; which exposition became, in time, a tradition to their posterities.

And this is exactly your case as to Christianity. Your fathers did at first embrace it upon the conviction of those many miracles shewn publicly before their faces ; but those of your fathers who did not believe, did not deny the matters of facts—only put a different construction upon them, saying that they were wrought by Beelzebub.

And those Jews who believed, and their posterities, are many more (as before shewn,) than those Jews who remained in their infidelity, if that were an argument ; for the tradition of two tribes was true, and that of ten was false. Therefore we must recur to the original, and that must determine the tradition on either side. And the argument insisted upon in the "Method with the Deists," stands wholly and irrefragably on our side ; and besides has the tradition of all your fathers, so far as to acknowledge the matters of fact (which in consequence is the whole ;) and the major number were convinced by them, or if not the major number then, yet certainly much more so now in their posterities, having by the miraculous providence of God escaped the dreadful destruction at Jerusalem, and under your several false Messiahs, which pursued those of your fathers only who hardened themselves in their obstinacy against Christ. So that the tradition of your fathers does not lie in your way, to prejudice you against Christianity. The most it can oblige you to, is to examine the several traditions of your fathers ; and that is it to which we would invite you. Consider, then, first, the tradition of your Christian fathers, who call themselves by the name of their Messiah, as you have done by the names of your fathers, Heber, and Israel, and Judah. And this was foretold by the prophet, (Isa. lxii. 3,) "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Therefore, though these your fathers have lost the name of Jews, yet they may say in the words of the same prophet, (Isa. lxiii. 16,) "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not ; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer ; thy name is from everlasting." This is an everlasting name by which they are now called, even the name of our God ; whereas they were heretofore called only by the name of your fathers in the flesh ; but now of your Father in heaven. Consider, I say, the tradition of these your Christian fathers, that it is on the affirmative side ; whereas the tradition of your unbelieving fathers is altogether upon the negative, particularly in that great article of our faith, the resurrection of Christ ; which being done in the sight only of a few soldiers, who were capable of being bribed, you trust wholly to their no-evidence, that his disciples stole him away while they slept. For how could they know this, if they were asleep ? Yet this is all the foundation you have for your negative ; but for the affirmative, there were "many infallible proofs, Christ being seen of his disciples forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," (Acts, i. 3.) "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve ; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part (says our apostle) remain unto this present," when he wrote, (1 Cor. xv. 5—8.) These were too many to be bribed, not with large money, as you gave to the soldiers, (Matt. xxviii. 12,) but with stripes, and imprisonments, and death, to have concealed such a forgery ; when any one of them might not only have avoided these persecutions, but, no doubt, have got much more large money than you gave to the soldiers for such a foolish excuse as they made ; for any one of these five hundred could have effectually discovered the contrivance, if it was one, and stifled Christianity in its cradle. And one evidence on that side would, at that time, have borne down five hundred on the other ; and the Christians putting you to the

trial of this, when these many witnesses were alive, and that not one of them could be tampered with, either by bribes or threats! that all should stand it out, even to the death!

But we have surer evidence than all this, even infallible. And that is, the many miracles which the apostles shewed in attestation to the truth of this,—miracles as flagrant and notorious as those which Christ himself had wrought, and which have all the four marks, mentioned in the "Method with the Deists," that do infallibly demonstrate the truth of any matter of fact.

These are the grounds of the tradition of your Christian fathers.

And all the ground for the tradition of your unbelieving fathers, is nothing else but that senseless story of the soldiers, sufficiently ridiculous to confute itself, were there no evidence at all on the other side.

Let me add to this, that your Christian fathers had all those difficulties to struggle with, which do now keep you back from Christianity. They hung as much as you upon the expectation of a temporal kingdom of the Messiah. The very apostles of our Lord were not wrought off of this, all the time that he lived with them, and they resumed their hopes of it after his resurrection, (Acts, i. 6.) They were ignorant of his resurrection, "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead," (John, xx. 9.) And so far were they from concerting of this, that they would not believe it, when it was first told them by those who had seen it: "Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not," (Luke, xxiv. 11.) And when all the other apostles had seen the Lord, yet would not Thomas believe even them, till he had more than even ocular demonstration, to "thrust his hand into his side, and put his finger into the print of the nails," (John, xx. 25, 27.) Nor was this peculiar to Thomas. For when Christ appeared first to the rest, they were as hard to believe; and he afforded them the like demonstration, not only to see, and hear him speak to them, but to handle him, and examine the wounds in his hands and feet, and farther, to eat before them, (Luke, xxiv. 39—49.) And as a yet more forcible conviction, he minded them how he had told them all this before; and that it was agreeable to the Scriptures of the Old Testament: "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Our blessed Lord suffered his disciples to be thus slow in believing, thereby to confirm our faith the more; but he would not permit them to proceed upon their mission, notwithstanding of all this evidence, till they should have yet farther credentials, such as no man could refuse without the highest obstinacy; and which is the utmost that God can outwardly exhibit, that is, the power of miracles. "But tarry ye," says he, "in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." And this was granted them at first, by a most stupendous miracle, in the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and inspiring them, in an instant, with all languages, which was visible not only to the Jews, but to multitudes of other nations, then at Jerusalem, (Acts, ii. 41,) "And the same day about three thousand were converted;" and by the many miracles which the apostles were enabled to work afterwards, many μυριάδες, myriads of the Jews, and "a great company of your priests, were obedient to the faith," (Acts, xxi. 20; vi. 7.) These were your fathers. Therefore reject not their tradition; compare with this the tradition of your other fathers, who believed not, which is built only upon a negative, of which there is no proof at all.

Then I desire you to recollect what has been said before, (from p. 31. to p. 34.) of your having forsaken the constant tradition of your fathers before Christ came, in so many particulars as are there set down, and having invented new and contrary traditions, on purpose to prejudice yourselves against Christianity. See likewise before, Sect. IV. p. 11.

And if traditions must take place, why not the most ancient? These sure are most authentic. And they are more traditions than the latter; for it is age that makes tradition. Yet you reject the most ancient traditions of your fathers, while you set up their tradition as your only infallible rule!

This is the first answer I give to your objection of following the tradition of your fathers, upon which you lay so great a stress. And which being removed, you will have little left to say. But though I think this answer very sufficient, yet because this is the main hinge of the controversy, as your learned Jew has stated it, and insists mightily, and almost solely upon it, through all his dispute with Limborch, and thence we may reasonably suppose that it is the *jugulum causæ*, the last effort you have to defend yourselves, I will therefore proceed upon it, even as stated by yourselves, and shew farther the weakness of it, supposing that none of your fathers had embraced Christianity.

Ans. 2. This, as stated by yourselves, is running into that circle in which the Church

of Rome have entangled themselves, of proving the authority of the Church by the Scriptures, and the authority of the Scriptures from the Church; which cannot be avoided, while, in this dispute, they consider the Church as exercising any act of authority; for that authority must be proved before it can be acknowledged; and if it be proved from the Scripture, and the Scripture receives its authority from the Church, then the authority of the Church is proved only from the authority of the Church.

But if the Church be brought herein only as witnesses, with the rest of mankind, upon the common reason and principles of mankind, the assurance of the senses of mankind, and the infallible manner of deducing matters of fact from former ages, and distinguishing the true from the false, and those which are certainly true from those which only may be true (which is the method taken in the "Method with the Deists,") then the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the facts therein contained, being established upon the common principles of mankind, the Church may justly build her authority upon what she finds given to her in the Holy Scriptures.

And thus may you justly argue from what you find attributed to your Church by the Law; having first vouched the truth of the matters of fact of Moses, as delivered in your Law, from the notoriety of the facts, and impossibility of any imposture therein, as is done in the "Method with the Deists."

But if, as this your learned Jew does, you ground the truth of Moses himself, and all that is said of him in your Law, and consequently of the Law itself, upon that credit only which your Law bids you have to your fathers, as being your fathers, you give up the whole cause; you run into the circle of believing the Law for your fathers, and your fathers for the Law; which is proving the same thing by itself.

Ans. 3. Your Samaritans vouched the tradition of your fathers, and theirs, against you: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," (John, iv. 20.)

Your ten tribes did vouch likewise the tradition of their fathers for their idolatries, and many vile abominations, (Jer. xi. 14.) Nay, even the two tribes in their captivity vouched the same: "We will burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem," (Jer. xliv. 17.)

If you say that they deviated in this from the Law, and that in this case we must have recourse to the first giving of the Law, and the ocular evidence, that was then shewn to all the people, of its being sent to them from God, as has been before quoted from your learned Jew,—I answer, that this is still appealing from the tradition of your fathers, and shews that there is something else to be looked to. This is owning that there may be a corrupt tradition of your fathers.

And therefore, though the Jews were bidden learn these things from their fathers, who had seen them, (there was all the reason in the world for it, for they could learn them from none other,) yet the assurance and credibility of what their fathers had seen, was not grounded upon that relation in which they stood to them, as being their fathers; but as their fathers were men, and as such, could not be deceived in what they saw and heard; and the assurance of that tradition by which these facts were conveyed to after ages, was not solely grounded upon the kindness and affection of their fathers, who cannot be supposed willing to impose upon their posterities, as this learned Jew does argue; but upon the nature of the tradition, which was incapable of any imposture, as has been argued in the "Method with the Deists."

For other men will pretend to the same kindness towards their children, as the Jews; and men that are deceived themselves, will transmit their deceits to their children: thus all errors are continued. Therefore we must recur to the original, and there examine the truth, upon the common principles of mankind; and see how this has been transmitted to us, and bring the nature of the tradition to the standard of the same common principles.

But if the Jews will stick to the tradition of their fathers, as the ultimate rule, from which there is to be no appeal, then they must stick to all their traditions, right or wrong; for if they pretend to any rule whereby to judge of their traditions, then their traditions are not the ultimate rule.

And it is strange to see how far this false notion has carried the Jews, even to acknowledge no other certain proof for the being of a God, but the Law of Moses! nor any other for that, but the tradition of their fathers, which I come next to insist upon.

Ans. 4. This foundation which the Jews have given of their faith, can never convert any other people to their religion, because others have the same deference for their fathers, as the Jews have for theirs; and the Jews can give no reason to the contrary: therefore the Jews, insisting only upon the tradition of their fathers, without farther proof, give the same liberty to all in whatsoever they have received from their fathers.

This our learned Jew confesses; for being pressed by Limborch to shew what arguments the Jews have against the Heathen, he freely owns that they have none at all, and bestows a whole chapter to prove it, (Limbor. Collat. p. 136.) That the Jews can only dispute with

the Christians, who acknowledge the books of Moses, for that the Jews have no other topic whereby to prove certainly even that there is a God; nor any other proof for the books of Moses, than the tradition of their fathers, who they supposed would not deceive them; and because these books bid them hearken to their fathers, and not to the Heathen. And if any should deny these books, says he, "Est atheus, quia non habet aliunde Dei existentiam certissime et indubitanter credat. Quamvis ex aliis principiis possit probabiliter conjectari; neque enim sufficit ratio, neque quod aliquis dixerit, de quo eadem fieret inquisitio. Hunc igitur convincere est impossibile, æque ac Dei existentiam, ac Mosis prophetiam, per quam nobis unice constat esse Deum," that is, "He is an atheist, because he has no other way whereby certainly to believe the existence of a God; though from other principles it may probably be conjectured: for neither is reason sufficient, nor what any man says, of which the same inquisition is to be made. Therefore it is equally impossible to convince such a one, as of the existence of a God, as of the prophecy of Moses; by which only it appears to us that there is a God." This is mad work! For there could be no ground to believe Moses, but upon the supposition of the previous notion of a God, who sent him. How else did his miracles vouch his being sent of God? And yet, says the Jew, by the prophecy of Moses only it appears to us that there is a God! And therefore he concludes, that as for a Heathen who rejects both the Law and the Gospel, "Ille neque ad Legem Mosis, neque ad Evangelium solida ratione convinci quit," that is, "That he cannot be convinced by any solid reason, of the truth either of the Law of Moses, or of the Gospel." And therefore, that there is no disputing with such an one. "Contra ethnicum non oportet disputare," is the title of this chapter; that is, "That we ought not to dispute against an Heathen," for this the Jew confesses freely, when being asked, "If an Heathen should deny that Moses was a prophet, only a cunning man who imposed upon the people, by what arguments the Jew could prove the divine mission of Moses, which would not as strongly prove the divine mission likewise of Christ?" "Respondo (says he) me nulla demonstratione Mosis prophetiam divinam esse, contra ethnicum probare posse; quippe id demonstrabile non est," that is, "I answer, that I cannot prove by any demonstration against an Heathen that the prophecy of Moses is divine, because it is not demonstrable."

And he says the same as to the Mahometans, that they have their tradition too, derived from their fathers, of the miracles and divine mission of Mahomet, and therefore that they can say to us, "Quod si Mahometi revelationem negaverimus, Mosis, etiam et Christi negare possunt, cum nullam rationem producere queamus, quæ suæ sectæ confirmationi non inserviat," that is, "That if we deny the revelation of Mahomet, they may likewise deny those of Moses and of Christ, seeing we can produce no reason for them, that will not serve likewise for the confirmation of their sect." And he grounds all upon this bottom, which he takes as granted: "Quod alicujus præteriti, nec etiam Dei, existentia ulla ratione demonstrari potest," that is, "That the existence of any thing that is past, no not of God, can be demonstrated by any reason." "Ideo argumentum nequit esse cum ethnico." That "therefore there cannot be any argument against an Heathen."

Now here I beseech you to consider how you have given up the whole foundation upon which the truth of your Law does stand, lest you should be forced to submit to the truth of the Gospel, which stands upon the same foundation. You have rendered your Law wholly precarious, while you tell all the world that there is no reason to be given for it, that is, none to convince an Heathen, a Mahometan, or any who denies it; for reason is reason to all the world; and nothing can be true for which there is not a reason sufficient to convince gainsayers.

You have by this confirmed both Heathens and Mahometans, as well as Christians, in what you think to be gross errors, and displeasing to God, by allowing them the same foundation for their faith that you have for yours, that is, the tradition of their fathers; and therefore you think that they have the same reason to stick to theirs as you have to stick to yours, which your learned Jew often confesses. Speaking of the reasons produced on the Christian side, he says, (Limbor. Coll. p. 132, et alibi passim,) "Et mea saltem sententia satis bonæ sunt et efficaces, ut Christiani eas amplectantur, et in sua fide roborentur; non vero ut Judæi Christiani fiant," that is, "They are, in my opinion, good reasons and sufficient for the Christians to embrace them, and to be strengthened in their faith, but not for the Jews, that they should become Christians." This is a strange sort of reasoning! For these reasons cannot be good reasons, unless they are true; and they cannot be true to one, and false to another, if they are rightly apprehended; unless the same reason can be both true and false. It is impossible that both Judaism and Christianity can be true; as impossible as that our Jesus is the Messiah, and that he is not the Messiah; and there can be no good reason for our believing him to be the Messiah, which must not operate as strongly for your believing of it; that is, if it be true, you ought to believe it, and if it be not true, we ought not to believe it. Therefore, your yielding that we have sufficient

reason to believe it, must conclude inevitably against yourselves, that you think it to be true; otherwise you could not think that we had sufficient reason to believe it.

If you say that this was a slip in that learned Jew, that he ought not to have made that concession, and that you are not bound by it; consider, that this was all that was left him to say; that he has managed your cause with great subtilty; that he took this way to avoid answering the plain and undeniable reasons which prove the truth of the Gospel, by yielding them to be such as to Christians, but that they are not the same as to the Jews; which turns the cause upon a new foot, and diverts the question.

But if you like not his management, and think you can make a better plea for yourselves; then you must answer the reasons given on the behalf of Christianity, particularly those urged in the "Method with the Deists," and this is all that I desire to bring you to. And now you have your choice, whether you will do this, and put your cause upon this issue; or otherwise stick to that evasion which this learned Jew has made for you.

There is another thing I would ask you upon this head. You expect the conversion of all the world to your religion in the reign of your Messiah. And you have given this as one reason of your dispersion, that you might convert all nations among whom you are scattered, as has been taken notice of before.

Now, I would ask how you are to convert them? You confess that there are no arguments to be used against them. You leave the Christians in full possession of their faith, and say they have sufficient reason for it; and for Heathens, &c. who do not acknowledge the books of Moses, you say they are not to be disputed with. How then are they to be converted by you?

Besides that your learned Jew complains (see before, p. 19,) that the Jews are perverted to the idolatries and other corruptions of the nations where they live, instead of converting these nations.

But suppose that it will be otherwise when your Messiah comes, and that then, or some time before, you will begin to convert the nations. This conversion cannot be by arguments, for you confess you have none against them. How then? There is no other way but that of Mahomet, by the sword; and this is the way it seems that you expect. Your learned Jew says, (Limbor. Collat. p. 55,) that there is no other miracle needful for the Messiah, whereby to vouch his mission, but one only, namely, "To gather the Jews out of all countries of the world; to restore the throne of David to its ancient and a greater majesty; and to bring all kings and nations to the true worship of God; and to love and esteem the Jews, which (says he) would be such a miracle, and so notorious, as to leave no room to doubt of it."

The uncertainty of this mark of your Messiah is shewn before, p. 15.

In the next place, this would be no greater a miracle than the successes of the Romans and others, from a small beginning, or of Mahomet, who boasts the same. And to which every wickedness has a title, so it be prosperous enough.

Your Rabbi Menasse (*de Resurrectione*, l. ii. c. xxi. as quoted by Hornbeck *Contr. Judæos*, l. ii. c. 1. p. 114,) gives up this argument, and says, "Non est tantum miraculum"—That "it is not so great a miracle, if the Messiah should conquer many nations and empires; since we see it often happen, that mean and abject men have arisen to kingdoms and empires, and become lords of many lands." Yet this learned Jew, who writes later, is forced to come back again to this no-miracle; for they can find none other.

And in expectation of this, you reject all the true and indubitable miracles of our Messiah, and his much more miraculous conquests of the Gentile world, as well as of myriads of the Jews, without force of arms, or any allurements to flesh and blood; but, on the contrary, by inviting them to self-denial, sufferings, and death! Which sure is a more extraordinary, and more miraculous sort of conquest, and shews more of divine power, than what is performed by the arm of flesh, outward force, or sensual incitements, like that which you expect, and like that of Mahomet and other impostors.

But though you should conquer, as you expect, yet it will not follow that you will thereby convert all nations.

It is not in a man's own power to change his sentiment of things, without sufficient reason to convince him, at least what he thinks a sufficient reason; much less can such a force be put upon him by any other. No outward conquest can reach to the soul, or alter our judgment and understanding.

And therefore, according to what you now profess, that you have no argument on your side, but your long expected conquest, it will not follow, if you obtained it to-morrow, that you should thereby convert any one man in the world to your religion; for perhaps there is not one man in the world that thinks conquest alone to be the true decision of controversies in religion. And if so, then every man must think that religion to be false, which pretends to no other title but that of conquest.

See how inextricably you have involved yourselves on all sides, in those various shifts you set up to harden yourselves against the flagrant truth of the Christian religion! You

have thereby undermined the whole foundation upon which the truth of your Law itself is demonstrable. And which you can never recover by any other means than those which establish the truth of our Jesus being the Messiah; which are the same that establish the truth of Moses; and (as has been said) are not compatible to any impostor whatsoever.

You pretend to us Christians, that you have no arguments against the deists or heathen. Why? Because it is impossible for you to bring any arguments for the truth of Moses, which will not likewise demonstrate more strongly the truth of our Jesus. But to the heathen you say not so. You pretend to argue with them, when you can get out of sight of Christianity. Then you proceed freely upon the certain and indubitable proofs which you have for the truth of Moses, when you are not afraid that Christianity should come in at the same door. This appears in your book Cosri, (whether that story be real or feigned,) which contains your arguments against the heathen. But in the presence of Christianity they are all struck dumb, like the oracles among the heathen. Not that the arguments for the truth of Moses are fallacious like those oracles: but as their deceit was superseded by the brightness of the Gospel, so are you stopt from daring to make use of the truth, because it makes against you. And you are forced to betray the cause of Moses, while you stand out against that of Christ; you cannot be true Jews or disciples of Moses, till you turn Christians. Then may you (as we do) freely urge the absolute certainty of the revelation made to Moses: which now you dare not do, because the same topics prove as demonstrably the truth of Christianity; rather than admit of which, you have laid your foundation in the sand of your fathers' traditions, so explained as to give you no advantage above all the traditionary fables of other nations. Which you allow to have the same motives of credibility to them, as yours to you: and consequently to be as true as yours.

This was not the method you took to make proselytes before Christ came. Then you had free use of your arguments, and a success proportionable; but now you seem careless what becomes of your religion, so you can overthrow Christianity. Therefore, having chosen a false and insufficient foundation for your own faith, you would compliment ours with the same.

As your learned Jew does when he asks, (Limborch, Collat. p. 51,) "What reason there is why a heathen should believe any who preached to him the Christian faith, and miracles of Christ and his apostles?" The "Method with the Deists" is a direct answer to this question, and serves the Jews as well as the deists. But this learned Jew did, and all the rest of you must think that question to be unanswerable: and as such it is here proposed. But then will not the question occur, What reason the Christians have to believe it? or the Jews to believe the law and miracles of Moses? Your learned Jew was aware of this, and therefore obviates it thus, "Neque par ratio est de Christianis et Judæis, qui interrupta traditione," &c. That there was not the same reason for the belief of the Christians and the Jews, who received it by an uninterrupted tradition from their fathers. This puts the Christian faith upon as good a bottom as the Jewish, that is the same, namely, tradition from their fathers; and if they have no other, they both stand precariously, and have no more to say for themselves even than the heathen. This the learned Jew does not oppose, and therefore explains himself, that by his question he did not mean those heathen who had long since believed the Gospel, and so received it by tradition from their fathers. "Sed quare nunc barbaræ Gentes, in suis ritibus semper educatæ, nostris traditionibus fidem præstabunt eo solum quod a nobis proponantur," that is, "But why the now heathen nations, who have always been educated in their own rites, should embrace our traditions, merely because they are proposed to them by us?" Indeed, merely because they are proposed, is a very bad reason. And yet it is all that the Jew thinks there is in the case, as before is shewn. But here he joins the Christian and the Jewish faith together; and makes both stand upon the same bottom; and that the same with the foundation even of the heathen religion; that rather than not overthrow Christianity, he would sink his own religion with it, and leave no true revealed religion in the world (all others but these falsely pretending to it;) and so serve the ends of the deists to all intents and purposes.

He endeavours to rivet this, as he thinks, securely, by the long tradition of the Popish legends, which he says, (Limborch, Collat. p. 133,) were believed by all Christendom for more than a thousand years, and no less faith given to them than to the Gospel itself. His mistakes in reciting matter of fact I am not now upon; these prevailed only in the Latin church, nor in all that neither, nor for so long a time as he imagines; the greatest part of the Christian church, in the East, in Africa, &c. never heard of most of them, nor have to this day: and those of the Church of Rome, who, though men of sense, pretended to believe them, yet durst not put them upon the same foot with the holy Gospel: the learned and more knowing among them called them *piæ fraudes*, and pleaded for them only as such, as pious cheats, to raise the devotion of the simple and more ignorant amongst the people; but none of them can

pretend to those four marks set down in the "Method with the Deists," whereby the truth of the miracles of Moses and of Christ are infallibly demonstrated; and therefore, if any of these legends were true in whole or in part, yet we cannot have the same grounds for believing of them as we have for the Law and the Gospel.

4th, Both of which you seem willing to mistake, in your deep prejudice to the Gospel. For the chief end of the coming of the Messiah being to "bruise the serpent's head," (Gen. iii. 15,) who had seduced man to sin,—to "finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity," (Dan. ix. 24,)—you now contend, that men were never under the curse of God, (Limbor. Collat. p. 54, 55.) "Quod neque aliquando fuerunt homines sub Dei maledictione—Quod non constat ex toto sacro textu illa ira Dei contra genus humanum, neque illa æterna maledictio: neque memini in quatuor Evangeliis me legisse hoc secretum a Christo fuisse detectum: quare putamus id postea inventum, ut aliis dogmatibus fundamentum substerneretur," that is, "That this wrath of God against mankind, nor that eternal curse, does appear in the whole sacred text: neither do I remember to have read in the four Gospels that this secret was discovered by Christ: therefore we think that it was invented afterwards, to lay a foundation for other opinions." This is a bold and desperate assertion; let any man read Matth. xxv. 46, and John, v. 29, and see whether eternal judgment be not there threatened? And whether these be not as it were repeating the very words of Daniel, (xii. 2,) that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life; and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Compare likewise Mark, ix. 44, with Isaiah, lxvi. 24, and then tell whether there is not a punishment after death for the wicked; and whether this be not revealed as well in the Old Testament as in the New?

If the Jew will criticise (as some Christians have done) upon the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, and say that they mean not a duration without end, I will give two answers.

1. That my business with the Jew is not now about the *eternity* of hell, but whether there be any punishment at all after death; because all the ends which the Jew proposes of the Messiah's coming respect only this life. And they deny any that are dead to have any benefit by the Messiah, (Limborch, Collat. Num. xvii. p. 70.) And if so, then his making reconciliation for iniquity cannot deliver any mortal from the punishment after death.

And this punishment being described in the texts before quoted, and several others of the Old Testament, to be exceedingly greater than any we can endure in this life, consequently the greatest benefit that we can receive by the Messiah is totally frustrated by the Jews; and they cannot deny but that the ends which the Christians propose for the coming of the Messiah, are exceedingly more noble and more beneficial than those which they propose; and fully as agreeable to the letter of the text, of bruising the head of the serpent, and making reconciliation for iniquity, and something more so, than our deliverance from worldly enemies, who are not so properly called the serpent as the devil is: and our deliverance from his power is more strictly called "a making an end of sin," and "finishing of transgression;" and more truly an everlasting deliverance (in whatever sense you will take that word) than any temporal deliverance. For if by everlasting you mean only temporal, yet it is the highest expression of temporal, and the greatest of temporal deliverances.

Let me not be mistaken, as if by "eternal" and "everlasting," the "worm not dying," and the "fire that never will be quenched," &c. I favoured at all their constructions which would make all these to mean nothing but temporary, though a very long duration; but I would not intermix new subjects in this discourse, and expatiate into long digressions; especially where the present controversy does not require it: therefore I go to my second answer.

2. If these words "eternal," &c. can be thus turned, or if they cannot, I desire to know from the Jews, what plain text they have in all the law of Moses for everlasting life in heaven, and in order thereunto, for the resurrection of the dead, which they profess firmly to believe? They gather these from texts which, as themselves confess, do bear another and a temporal meaning, respecting their outward state in this world: but which withal do (they say) typically represent their future glorious state in heaven, their true and everlasting Canaan. Yet they will not allow any thing in their law to be a type of the Messiah! Why? Because the law does not expressly say, that such a thing is a type of the Messiah. Which yet it says as much as that Canaan was a type of heaven; that there will be any resurrection of the dead, or eternal life after that. What express Scripture have they for what Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel, in his treatise of *The Resurrection of the Dead*, does affirm to be the common opinion of the rabbins, namely, "that all the Israelites, even those that are dead, shall be partakers of the kingdom of the Messiah: and that to this end, all those that are dead shall be raised again; by which miracle the wicked, being converted, shall acknowledge the true God, and forsake their errors: that then there shall be an end of this world, and a new one arise, or a change of this into a much better

condition, wherein the moon shall be as bright as the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold more than it is now : at which time the demons and evil spirits shall be destroyed, and the trees bear fruit every month : and then that God shall make a noble feast to the righteous out of the fish the leviathan : and that there shall be peace among the wild beasts, neither shall they hurt men in that holy land : that then the temple of God shall be built again, and the holy land be again divided amongst the tribes, where they shall eat and drink, beget children, and each be married to his own proper wife," &c. (Limbor. Collat. p. 221, 222.) This Turk's paradise after death, they can gather out of the words of the law. They can find there their sumptuous fish dinner upon the great whale leviathan ; but nothing of the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah, nothing of their deliverance from sin and hell, but eating and drinking, and lying with women. They should, upon this their scheme of the state after death, answer the question which one of the Sadducees asked at our Saviour, concerning the seven brethren who had one wife, " whose wife she should be at the resurrection ?"

And now I beseech you to consider, is it not a fatal delusion this, that you should reject all the plain prophecies of the Messiah, because they do not, in such express words as you would dictate, lay open every particular of his spiritual state and government, and, at the same time, turn these prophecies to such wild and groundless fancies as are no ways typified by your sacrifices or any institution in your law, nor can fill up, in any tolerable measure, the glories and extent of all those magnificent prophecies concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, wherein God hath prepared for those who shall be thought worthy of it, not wine, and women, and eating, such gross carnal pleasures as we are made capable of in this frail life, but such things as " since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen," (Isa. lxiv. 4.) Yet because they are not particularly described, (which cannot be so as we could understand them,) you will not believe them, or that they reach beyond enjoyments of sense ! And for this sole reason you reject your Messiah, because he brings you glories so far beyond all that you looked for. Though that likewise, in the above quoted text, and many others of your Scriptures, has been foretold to you.

And it is likewise shadowed out to you in this, that there was no sacrifice or expiation in your law for the most heinous crimes, such as blasphemy, idolatry, murder, adultery, incest, &c. as your learned Jew confesses, (Limbor. Collat. p. 209.)

Nay, lesser sins than these, as that of Eli's not effectually restraining, though he reproved his sons, were " not to be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever," (1 Sam. iii. 14.)

Some Jews fancy that the yearly sacrifice of expiation made an atonement for all their sins.

We see, not for this of Eli's ; nor, consequently, for greater sins.

The yearly sacrifice was but a sacrifice, though more solemn than the daily sacrifices ; and therefore it purged all those sins only which could be purged by sacrifice.

If all the sins of the Jews had been purged every year, then had they not been remembered, brought to account, and so grievously punished as we have seen, and was oft threatened in the law, in after ages, more than to the third and fourth generation. And it was a noted observation of your fathers, that there was a grain of the golden calf in all your after judgments, that is, that that sin was never totally forgiven, but still called to remembrance upon every fresh provocation. It is said, (Hos. ii. 13,) " I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burnt incense to them." And all the goodness and godly reformation of Josiah could not pacify God for the sins of Manasseh, which he would not pardon, but for them removed Judah out of his sight, (2 Kings, xxiii. 26 ; xxiv. 3, 4,) " And surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts," (Isa. xxii. 14.)

Therefore there were some sins which were not purged by the legal sacrifices, and these were the greatest of their sins ; they were but the lesser sort of sins that were purged by them. How then were the greatest purged ? If you will say, by repentance only, without any sacrifice.

Ans. The lesser sins require repentance, and do they need sacrifice too, when the greater sins are purged without it ? or are greater sins more easily purged than the lesser ?

Here, then, behold your Law declaring of itself that it is not perfect ; that there was a farther and more efficacious sacrifice and atonement for sin than what was under the Law. And this for the greatest of your sins. Then cast your eye upon that text in your Law, " Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them," (Deut. xxvii. 26.) And consider, that there was no atonement or sacrifice in your Law for the greatest and most heinous breaches of the Law. How then shall you be delivered from this curse ? Or can you enter into eternal life without your being purged from this curse ? Do you expect to be admitted into heaven, while cursed and in your pollutions ? Can any cursed thing enter there ? Then reflect upon the desperateness of that position of yours, (Limbor. Coll. p. 98. ad finem,) " Nos vero nec redemptionem quam expectamus, nec

Messiam ipsum pro animarum salute, nec pro gloria æterna consequenda necessaria esse credimus," that is, "We do believe that neither the deliverance which we expect (by our Messiah) nor our Messiah himself are necessary towards the salvation of our souls, or for the obtaining of eternal glory." Now then, if neither in the Law, nor in the future reign which you expect of your Messiah, there will be any propitiation or sacrifice for the greatest of your sins, how do you expect to be purged from them? Or must you enter into heaven before you are purged from them? Or were sacrifices only needless ceremonies, and not effectual for the purging of those sins, which were purgeable by them? Or were greater sins easier purged—that is, by repentance only—than lesser sins, which, besides repentance, were not to be purged without sacrifice also?

I confess all this is out of doors, and urged to no purpose, if it be true which you have advanced (as before quoted) that men, by the fall, were never under the curse of God, and therefore needed no deliverance from it; that Israel was an holy nation, because they are so called in Scripture; and that Aaron was commanded to bless them, and God said to Balaam that they were blessed. All which, says your learned Jew, (Limbor. Coll. p. 55,) is so contrary to their being eternally cursed, "ut neque Deus ipse posset ea componere," "that God himself cannot reconcile it."

I suppose he intends to come off by the word *eternal*, that it is not reconcileable with their being eternally under the curse of God; because there are so many places in the Law and the prophets which speak of their great wickedness, and being under the temporal curse of God.

But blessing is as contrary to cursing in this world, as in the next; for they are opposites in the nature of the thing; and therefore if the authority of such texts as those before quoted will free them from the eternal, it must also from the temporal curse, or from any curse at all.

But why then are they called holy and blessed, if they be under the curse? I suppose neither Jew nor Christian need be instructed in this, it is so known and common a distinction; men are called holy or blessed upon a personal, or a relative account, as they are holy in themselves or related to holy things. Thus a nation or people taken into federal covenant with God more peculiarly than any other nation upon the earth, may be called "blessed above all the nations of the earth," and "an holy people," in respect of the holiness of their laws, covenant, promises, &c. given to them by God.

Yet these may be a wicked and a cursed people, in respect to their practice, if they live not pursuant to their holy law. Thus said Moses to your nation, (Deut. ix. 6,) "Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people." And says God himself, (Ezek. xvi. 48,) "As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters;" (ver. 51,) "neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins." And again, (Mal. iii. 5,) "Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Yet all this while, that nation was called "the holy nation," and Jerusalem "the holy city," when it was full of murderers, because there was the temple and stated worship of God. Are these now such contradictions that God himself cannot reconcile? Behold the same people blessed and cursed at the same time, but not in the same respect; therefore, trust not in your being called the holy people, notwithstanding of which you see you may be cursed, (Jer. vii. 4,) not only here but hereafter; for, as said before, to be blessed and cursed is as great a contradiction in this life as the next, and for a moment as for eternity. And you find and complain, that you are cursed here upon many temporal accounts; and urge your great sins as the cause of your Messiah delaying his coming. Now, sin is as much a contradiction to holiness, and more than the curse of afflictions and punishment; therefore, if you can reconcile your being the holy people, with your being, at the same time, such great sinners, you have solved the contradiction yourselves, which you thought too hard (when it made against you) for God himself. And you must at last grant, after all your struggling, that, by the fall of Adam, men were put under the curse of God, from which there were no sacrifices in your Law sufficient to purge our souls; that therefore another and more efficacious sacrifice than the blood of bulls and of goats, was necessary for the purging of our sins; and you reject this sacrifice of our Messiah, upon pretence that it is not clearly and in express words revealed in the Old Testament, without any figurative and dubious phrases; while, at the same time, you build your hopes of heaven, and explain the resurrection of the dead in such a manner, and upon such texts, as by no force can be screwed to those wild meanings you put upon them.

And on the other side, when the death and sacrifice of the Messiah, and the satisfaction thereby made to God for our sins, are revealed in those plain and express words, (Isai. liii.) that "He made his soul an offering for sin; that God saw the travail of his soul, and was satisfied; that he laid upon him the iniquity of us all; that he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made

intercession for the transgressors," &c. Then (as before shewn, p. 9) death must not mean death, nor must any of those words be taken literally; but you put such forced and figurative interpretations upon them, as they can by no means bear, which is proved, p. 9.

You except against figurative expressions, yet you use them; you turn the plainest words into figures, and then tell us we have no plain words; you deduce consequences (as your notion of the resurrection, &c.) from words which are no ways plain, nor can mean what you infer from them; you raise doctrines (as of the leviathan, &c.) from no words at all in your Scriptures, yet you require for our doctrines, positive words out of your Scriptures! And when you have such, you will not accept of them.

What Scripture can you produce for your monstrous story of Armillus! which Hornbeck (*Contr. Jud.* p. 253,) relates out of your author Avkrt Rochel, *sub signo Messiæ septimo apud Hulsium*, p. 51. You suppose that a company of most profligate fellows will invent a new sin; that they will take a beautiful stone statue of a woman, that is in Rome, and warming it, will lie with it; that from thence it will conceive, and at last bursting, there will come forth a child, whose name shall be called Armillus; that he shall be twelve cubits high, and betwixt his eyes the length of a span; that he will say to the wicked, I am your Messiah and your God; that they will believe in him, and make him their king, and that to him will be gathered all the posterity of Esau. That your first Messiah, Ben Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim, will fight against him, with thirty thousand Israelites, and shall have success in the first battle, but in the second battle that your Messiah will be killed, and his army routed; that the angels will take away the dead body of your Messiah, and keep it with those of the patriarchs; that after this shall arise your second Messiah, Ben David, of the tribe of Judah, and Elias with him; to whom the Jews that are left shall be gathered, and oppose Armillus; that God shall destroy Armillus and his whole army by fire and brimstone and great stones cast down upon them from heaven. Then that Michael shall sound a trumpet so loud, as to open the graves, and raise the dead in Jerusalem; and that the first Messiah, Ben Joseph, shall then be raised, who was kept under the gates of Jerusalem; that then the Messiah Ben David shall be sent to gather the dispersed of the Jews from amongst all nations; all of whose kings will bring them upon their shoulders, &c.

This is the manner by which you interpret the Scriptures; several of which are quoted in this relation (as Psalm cx. 1; Zech. xiv. 3; Ezek. xxxviii. 22; Obad. i. 18.) as being to be fulfilled in the above mentioned story of Armillus.

Which, as it is wholly destitute of truth, or even probability, the mad excursion of groundless imagination; so does it in no sort come up to the prophecies in the Holy Scriptures concerning the Messiah; or the types of him therein exhibited, which are all fulfilled, even to an iota, in our blessed Lord and Saviour.

Yet you reject him as not being sufficiently revealed in Scripture, while you think you can deduce from thence this beastly and unworthy legend of Armillus!

You have been told before of the strange uncertainty you are at in the marks you have set up whereby to know your Messiah, when he comes, which you have reduced all to success, which cannot be known till the trial: and that has ended in your destruction, all the way hitherto, in the many experiments you have made under your several false Messiahs; and you can never be sure, in any other who shall hereafter set up.

Nay, farther, you must be sure to be ruined, by whomsoever shall first set up, by this scheme which you have laid down; for your Messiah Ben Joseph must first come and be slain, and your armies routed by Armillus. So that it is not success, but ruin that must be the mark of your first Messiah; this is great encouragement for any of you to follow whomsoever shall set up next for your Messiah.

You have had many such Messiahs already, and whenever Ben Joseph shall come, he must be another unfortunate Messiah. You must by your own reckoning, be once more undone before your Messiah Ben David can come; and when your Messiah Ben Joseph shall come and be defeated, how will you know, by that mark, that it is he? That mark you have had in all the Messiahs you ever yet set up; so that you will be still left to expect a farther destruction. Thus deplorable is your state!

Besides, which of these Messiahs is it—Ben Joseph or Ben David—to whom all those marks given of the Messiah in the Scriptures do belong, as to the time, place, and other circumstances of his coming? Or do some belong to one, and some to the other? Then you must tell which belong to which, or else you may be deceived in both, at least you can be sure of neither.

XV. Neither of them can possibly now have that mark insisted upon before, (Sect. V. p. 11, &c.) of the general expectation of the whole earth, not only of the Roman Empire, but of all the East, that a wonderful and extraordinary person should be sent into the world about that time, who should be universal monarch of all the kings of the earth; and accordingly, three kings came out of the East to worship our Jesus, guided by the miraculous

leading of a new star raised in heaven to point him out.

But there is no such expectation now in the world, but only amongst you. Therefore none of your Messiahs can come with that mark, which seems even necessary, to introduce such a Saviour into the world.

For to suppose such a person designed by God from all eternity to be universal Lord and Saviour of the whole earth ; and that all the dispensations which God ever gave to man were directed to him, as the centre and completion of all ; it would seem necessary and proportionable to such an economy, that so glorious a person should be not only foretold, but prefigured in types and observances ; nay it could not be otherwise, if all the institutions of religion were to be completed in him, for that would naturally infer that they were, that they could be, no more than types and forerunners of him to whom they pointed.

Thus Christ is said to have been promised *πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων*, (Tit. 1, 2,) which words, if they should not reach the length of our English translation, namely, "before the world began," by which the revelation of the great Messiah must have been made to the angels in heaven, before the creation of man, or of this lower world ; yet this we are sure of, that Moses has told us, (Gen. iii. 15,) he was promised to Adam and Eve, immediately upon their fall ; then were sacrifices instituted, as types of the great and only sacrifice which could bruise the serpent's head, and make atonement for sin, which by that promise was reserved for the seed of the woman, and therefore could not be fulfilled in the blood of beasts.

This institution of sacrifices descended from that time, through all the posterities of Adam, as a necessary part of religion and the worship of God ; and even the heathen retained so much of their original institution, that they looked upon them in the nature of a vicarious suffering of others for our sin : and the wisest of them did thence conclude, that there must be some more noble sacrifice than that of beasts, whereby our sin should be purged. This led some of them to human sacrifices ; but still that was not blood more noble than our own : and they could go no farther.

Yet they were in expectation of the coming of a glorious person from heaven, who should purge their sins, and introduce a new and golden age of justice and all goodness, to extend through the whole earth ; and they generally all over the world did expect him then to come, at that time when our blessed Jesus was born, as before has been shewn.

But that expectation is now over ; there never was such at any time, either before or after that very time ; the expectation was always, long before that time, but no time except that time, was the time expected for his coming ; therefore none of your Messiahs whom you still expect can possibly enter the world with this necessary and glorious mark of the Messiah ; for that time being over, to which the general expectation was determined, it ceased there, and cannot now be taken up again ; because, as it could not be begun by concert, through so many distant nations, who held no correspondence, and its beginning was never known, so for the same reasons, it cannot now be begun again, for then the beginning would be known, and it could not, without a miracle, gain such acceptance as to become universal through the whole world, as it was before.

And without this, it could not be said, "the Desire of all nations shall come," (Hag. ii. 7.) for how was he their desire, if they expected no such person to come ?

But as neither of the Messiahs whom you pretend to look for are expected by any body but yourselves, and that not by all, if any of you (as we have reason to believe) in good earnest ; so if they were expected according to the scheme that you have drawn, the first would be the contempt, and the second the terror, but neither of them "the Desire of all nations."

And neither of these motives, either of terror or contempt, could persuade the Gentiles towards the fulfilling of what is written concerning the Messiah, (Isai. lx. 3,) "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

This began remarkably to be fulfilled in the coming of the three kings from the east, to the light, whether literal of the miraculous star, or what that signified, the light of the Gospel ; and these came to the Messiah, not, as you expect, after being reduced by force of arms, and converted by his success in war, but they came "to the brightness of his rising," to his birth, and adored him in his swadling-clothes. They "rejoiced with exceeding great joy," (Matt. ii. 10.) when they saw his signal hung out in the heavens. This joy could not come from contempt or fear. But he was truly "the Desire of all nations." Which neither of your Messiahs can be, by your own account of them.

He was not to come as a terror, but a light to the Gentiles ; as he has proved, not by conquering, but converting of them.

And, towards this, it was necessary that he should come under all those circumstances which were proper for the obtaining of such an end ; to persuade the Gentiles to receive him, as a legislator sent from heaven, for spiritual and eternal purposes, and not with any design upon their temporal government, or for any secular by-ends of his own.

Therefore, he ought not to have come in the outward pomp and grandeur of the world ;

but the farthest removed from it that was possible, of mean, but virtuous parentage, his life to be led in poverty and afflictions, and his death ignominious. He must have come in a corrupt and wicked age, to oppose iniquity in its torrent. And hence it naturally follows, that he must be persecuted, even to the death; and that his death could not be deferred long after his beginning to preach publicly; for that a wicked world could not long bear it. Which was the reason Socrates gave at his trial, why he taught privately so long, (Plato, Apol. Socr;) for that otherwise he must have perished sooner, and so have been able to do less good.

And we may reasonably suppose that this was one cause why our blessed Saviour did not begin to preach till he was thirty years of age, (Matt. iv. 17; Luke, iii. 23,) and about three years after, was crucified

Plato, describing the character of a perfect just man, says, "that he shall be scourged, tormented, fettered, and at last, having suffered all manner of evils, that he shall be crucified, or cut in pieces," as the sacrifices were. [4]

And says, "that it is necessary they should wait till such an one should come, to teach them how they ought to behave themselves towards God and towards man. Oh, when shall that time come? (says he,) and who shall be that teacher? How greatly do I desire to see that man, who he is?" [5]

And he says, (De Leg. l. 4,) that this lawgiver must be somewhat more than of human race; for that as beasts are governed by men, so must men by a nature which is superior to their own: and, therefore, that this man, who was to be the universal lawgiver to mankind, must likewise partake of the nature of God. This was the ground of the heathen notion, in feigning their heroes and demons to be begotten by the Gods. So agreeable (but far exceeding) was our Jesus in his nature, and all his qualifications, to the notion and expectation of the Gentiles! and therefore have so many of them gladly submitted unto him. [6]

But such a Messiah as you Jews do now describe yours to be, as it was far from what the Gentiles expected, and therefore he could never convert, though he should conquer them: so, it seems not, indeed, that yourselves do expect any such an one, as you pretend only for an excuse.

Some of your Rabbies saying, that he is come; some, that he will never come; some, that he will not come in this world, till the resurrection of the dead; others, that his coming is not material, nor to be placed amongst the fundamentals of your faith; others, that his coming is no way desirable, as bringing greater mischief with it than advantage to the Jews; others, forbidding all inquiry into the time of his coming, as indeed despairing of it.

Of all these particulars see the authorities of your own Rabbies, in Hornbeck *Contr. Jud.* l. 2. p. 114, 115, and 123. There you will find, in *Codice Sanhedrim*, R. Hillel saying, "That no Messiah shall be given to Israel, for that they have had him already, in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah." And in your Talmud, R. Ula says of the Messiah, "Let him come, but let me not see it;" that is, for the miseries it will bring to the Jews, in gathering them out of all countries, where they are peaceably settled, to forsake their houses and possessions, and follow their Messiah to wars, and the calamities that attend it. Especially, considering what has been before said, that they must certainly expect destruction and ruin, under their first Messiah Ben Joseph; for all which, their possessing, at last, the land of Canaan, will be no sufficient reparation; they living now in countries as good as that, and enjoying both ease and plenty. That the conquests of their Messiah may bring greater glory to him, but no good to the Jews, proportionable to the miseries they must endure in fighting for him; upon all which considerations, R. Ula had reason to say, "Let him come, but let me not see him." The same said Rabba, and Rabbi John, in *Codice Sanhedrim*.

And the many disappointments you have met with in your Messiahs hitherto, has

[4] Ὁ δίκαιος μαστιγώσεται, στρεβλώσεται, δεδήσεται — Τελευτῶν, πάντα κακὰ παθὼν ἀνασκινδυλευθήσεται. De Repub. l. ii.

[5] Ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἐστι τερετίζειν ἕως ἂν τις μάθῃ ὡς δεῖ πρὸς Θεοὺς καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διακεῖσθαι. Πότε οὖν παρέσται ὁ χρόνος οὗτος; καὶ τίς ὁ παιδεύσων; ἥδιστα γὰρ ἂν μοι δοκῶ ἰδεῖν τοῦτον τον ἄνθρωπον τίς ἐστιν. Alcibiad. de Precat.

[6] Plato, in his Discourse concerning Prayer and the Worship of God, above quoted, concludes, that men, by their natural reason, cannot find out what sort of worship will be acceptable to God, nor can be sure what they ought to pray for according to his will; and that it were safer to forbear sacrifices and prayer than to venture upon it, when we did not know but that we might provoke God thereby, instead of pleasing him; that therefore it was necessary they should wait till God should send some person from heaven to instruct them in this; and that they did expect such a person to be sent. And they greatly longed to see that time, and that man, who they believed should come. They saw "his day, and rejoiced," (John, viii. 56,) as Abraham did, but not so clearly, not having so full and express revelation of him as Abraham had. But from revelation they had it, (and not merely from the strength of their reason,) though perhaps they knew it not, for they declared that they had it by tradition from their fathers. And, in all probability, it had descended through all Adam's posterity, from the first promise of it, (Gen. iii. 15,) together with the institution of sacrifices, which were ordained, not only as constant remembrances of it, but as visible types of the fulfilling of it. Though the original and full import of the one, as well as the other, had been lost amongst the heathen. This is brought to shew the expectation that the Gentiles had of a Messiah to come.

But here I would, from this reasoning of Plato's, infer the necessity of revealed religion against the Deists. Here they see that the wisest of the philosophers did own that they were wholly at a loss and uncertainty without it.

And withal, it shews that the wisest of the heathen did not believe the pretended revelations of their gods; and therefore there can lie no comparison betwixt these and the faith which is most surely believed by the Christians.

made you forbid any to inquire into the time of the Messiah's coming. Your *Schebet Jehuda*, p. 245. (as quoted by Hornbeck, p. 123,) curses those "who set any time for the coming of the Messiah;" and gives this reason, "that if the Messiah does not come at that time, the people's hearts do fail, and they think that they are put off with perpetual fruitless hope." Therefore in the Talmud, *Codice Sanhedrim*, cap. xi. Rabbi Samuel says, in the words of R. Jonathan, "Let their bones be broken, who compute the periods of the times." And this may the better be forbid, because R. Josephus Albo has struck this article concerning the coming of the Messiah out of the number of your fundamental doctrines. So that now you may believe it or not, as you please.

And how then will the Gentiles be converted by you? You have confessed (as before shewn, p. 41, &c.) that you have no arguments against them; and now you seem to despair even of conquering them; though, if that were done, it would rather obstruct their conversion, as has been argued before.

And plain reason does evince, that the qualifications of a Messiah for the conversion of the Gentiles, could be no other than what were found in our Jesus; and such an one they did expect, and, therefore, so readily did give up their names to him.

As his miracles were so flagrant and undoubted, as to vouch him sent of God, so could not malice itself find out the least possibility of any sinister or self-end in him. Therefore, he lived poor, and persecuted, and poured out his soul unto death, as a demonstration, that "his kingdom was not of this world."

He chose followers that were poor and unlearned; and that was necessary to obviate the objection, that either interest or craft had any part in the framing of his doctrine. He enjoined to all his disciples the doctrine of self-denial, and the cross, and bade them look for nothing but afflictions in this world; and this was necessary to obviate the objection, as if either lust, pleasure, or ambition had any part in the framing of his doctrine.

He was rejected by you, of his own nation; and this was necessary to obviate the objection, as if he sought to gain you to his side, upon the account of obtaining the dominion over you, and then to turn your arms against the Gentiles.

His conquest of the Gentiles, by their conversion, did not begin till after his ascension; and this was necessary to obviate the objection, as if he had sought the temporal rule over them, as Mahomet did over his converts, and as you propose of your Messiah.

And not in the first conversion of the Gentiles, nor for three hundred years after, were any of their kings or states brought into Christianity; and this was necessary to obviate the objection, as if the forgery of the Gospel had been supported by human authority, which rendered it hazardous for any to have detected the deceit. This was so necessary, as that we see the Deists, for want of this, have yet the impudence to suppose it, contrary to all truth, (Toland's Life of Milton, p. 91, 92, printed, an. 1699,) namely, that authority and laws being on the Christian side, was the cause that its deceit was not detected at the beginning, which is now too late to be done, for the distance of the ages.

Therefore, we may now see the wonderful providence of God in this conduct, for, if the Deists had the argument (as they foolishly pretend it) of the Gospel being abetted by kings or states, in its infancy, or before it was fully settled, and spread over the earth, we should never get their mouths stopt, and it would bear a great face of suspicion, that some cheat might have been put upon us, when none who knew it durst discover it without apparent hazard to themselves.

And again, kings and states might have come, by this time of day, to think that their authority had something to do in settling of the Church, and that the Gospel was beholden to them; at least sycophants and flatterers would so have complimented them, and Erastianism would have had a plausible plea. It is a branch of Deism; it stands and falls with that. And if it had such an umbrage as this, it would overrun us; for it keeps its ground without it.

But Christ would not permit kings to become his servants, till he had first endured three hundred years of their persecution; to teach them that his Church was not built upon their shoulders, nor depended upon their authority, and to stop the mouths of these several sorts of Deists.

In all things, in every step of his conduct, there does appear such divine wisdom and foresight, as that if any part had been otherwise than it is, the whole would have been visibly defective, and consequently, not from God; not that many things defective may not be from God: he makes every thing perfect in its kind, to the end for which he has ordained it, but he makes some things for higher ends than others, and in comparison one thing is more perfect than another.

Thus, the Law of Moses was perfect in its kind, for those ends and purposes to which it was designed; but Moses was not designed for the ultimate and universal lawgiver, he never pretended to it; but, on the contrary, he pointed out to one who was to come after him, and denounces God's judgments against those who should not hearken unto him, (Deut. xviii. 18, 19.)

Moses was not designed, nor his Law calculated for the conversion of the Gentiles.

And he had few of those qualifications which the Gentiles required in the supreme and universal lawgiver. He was bred up at Pharaoh's court, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, who were then the most learned nation upon the face of the earth; he was mighty in words, and in deeds. He marched out of Egypt at the head of six hundred thousand men, and, having rescued his own nation, he became their king, (Deut. xxxiii. 5.) Therefore, he was not free from the suspicion of design in the case, and was a man every way qualified, both for wisdom, courage, and education, to have contrived and effected it.

And after him his disciples went on, according to his example, conquering with the sword. And you now tell us, that they had no other design but to gain that pleasant country to themselves; that the Law which Moses gave them proposed nothing to them beyond this; and that you hope for no more from the Messiah whom you expect, but temporal conquests, to restore you to that land again, and to subdue the whole world under you by force of arms; that there is nothing at all spiritual or heavenly in his kingdom, but only a temporal earthly grandeur; that it was not meant to carry you to heaven, but to make you great upon earth; that the offices of the Messiah respect only temporal things, and are no ways necessary towards the salvation of our souls or eternal life, as your learned Jew, before quoted, (p. 47,) has asserted, (Limborch, Collat. n. iv. p. 53, and n. xiv. p. 66.)

Now, what would Socrates, or Plato, or any of the wise men among the Gentiles, say to this notion of a Messiah? Would they not have detested it as vicious, as recommending of pride, ambition, covetousness, and the vanity of this world; against which they fought, and thought them unworthy of a philosopher, or a truly virtuous person? Therefore such a Messiah could never have converted them.

But, on the other hand, there is not any one circumstance or qualification which they could desire in a Messiah, which is not filled up, nay far exceeded, in their own way, beyond what they could have contrived, as to the strictest rules of virtue, in the person, life, and death of our Messiah, and in all his conduct: shewing beyond the possibility of a deceit, or a face of suspicion, that he was a legislator sent from heaven, without any temporal designs; first, to give the sanction of God to morality, which, though these philosophers taught truly, yet could they not stamp upon it such a seal of divine authority; and secondly, to carry them farther, and teach them the true worship of God and expiation of their sins, with the assurance of everlasting life, and the means of obtaining it; all which they confessed they wanted, and that they did expect such a Messiah, or a person anointed, a Christ, that is, delegated and authorized by God to be born into the world, who should teach this Gospel or glad tidings unto them; and he came with such demonstration of his commission, and divinely wise conduct in all administration, that a Socrates, a Pythagoras, or a Plato, could not only have found no objection, but must have admired and adored, as so far exceeding whatever they imperfectly had conjectured, though they were assisted with the greatest wisdom and virtue that was in all the Gentile world.

Thus you see that the objections which you Jews, and some of the lewd and foolish Deists, have made against the poverty, suffering, and death of our Messiah, turn all into demonstrations of his truth, and were so necessary, that as he could not have fulfilled the Law without them, so could he never, any otherwise, have been received of the Gentiles.

For God forces not, though he governs the wills of men: that would be to destroy the creature he had made, for without the freedom of will, man would not be a reasonable animal. And the wisdom of God is chiefly known, in so disposing of things as to bring his own purposes to pass, and yet leaving men to the full freedom of their own wills.

This was one reason why our Jesus would not suffer the devils to confess to him, and charged several whom he cured not to make it known, till the time should come that he was to suffer; for that would have hastened his sufferings before the time, for the reason before given out of Socrates his "Defence."

It was in his power to have forced the Jews to a confession of him, but then they had not acted freely; therefore, having given them all reasonable conviction of his mission, he left them to their freedom, whether they would acknowledge him or not; and their obstinacy did harden them still more, and depraved their judgment, which was a just punishment of their obstinacy, as well as a natural effect of it, for sin does always punish itself; it is its own accuser, judge, and executioner. This blinded the obstinate among the Jews, that they knew not their Messiah, for, "had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" and thus that wonderful economy for the salvation of man was brought about by the greatest conduct of wisdom and goodness that was possible.

And by the same means the conversion of the Gentiles was contrived; for had the Jews all generally followed Christ, the Gentiles, being left to their own freedom, would never have received him; because they would have looked upon him as a legislator sent only to the Jews, whose law kept them at the utmost distance and detestation of the Gentiles,

whom therefore the Gentiles hated, and despised, and thought it abomination so much as to eat with them, (Gen. xliii. 32;) and therefore would have disdained to have received a lawgiver from them, who pretended to a right and a promise to conquer and overcome all the whole Gentile world, and subdue them under their Messiah, which they understood was to be by force of arms. And though such Messiah had set up, with never so much guise of humility and meekness, and put out the most specious declarations, (as other conquerors have at first done,) if he had led the whole body of the Jews after him, the Gentiles would have looked upon all this as a trick to disarm them, by rendering them secure, and would not have so been caught.

On the other hand, the Jews could never have received a Messiah from the Gentiles; that was contrary to all the promises made to them in their Law.

Therefore, as it was necessary, with respect to the *segullah*, that the Messiah should be of the Jews; so was it necessary, in respect of the Gentiles, that he should be rejected by the chief of the Jews; that he should be persecuted and destroyed by them; he could not otherwise have become an universal lawgiver both to the Jews and the Gentiles.

And let me say, in respect of the Deists, it was necessary that there should be a *segullah*, or peculiar church of God set up somewhere, in some one nation of the world, else the whole earth would have been irrecoverably sunk in idolatry; and there could never in such a frame of things be any expiation for the sins of mankind, who, therefore, were all represented in the nation of the *segullah*, and to be by degrees incorporated into them, and converted by them; as is shewn before, (p. 28.)

And it was likewise necessary, that this nation of the *segullah* should be the fewest and most neglected people of the earth, as shewn, (p. 28.)

And as it was necessary, that the Messiah should have been rejected by the chief and governing part of the Jews, the chief-priests, and Sanhedrim; so was it as necessary, that he should have been received and followed by others of the meanest and less noticed of the Jews. Because the Gentiles were to be converted by the Jews, and brought into their *segullah*, as shewn before, (p. 36, 37.)

And these Jews, who at first followed Christ, were to be but few and inconsiderable during his life, to take away all umbrage from the Gentiles, as well as the governing part of the Jews, that he designed any infraction upon their civil rights and liberties.

Therefore the great flowing in of the Jews first, particularly of their priests, (Acts, vi. 7,) and afterwards of the Gentiles, was not till after the ascension of our blessed Lord, to put them out of all fear of his going about to set up a temporal kingdom after his resurrection, (as his disciples expected, Acts, i. 6,) for that had made a great noise, and given the alarm both to the High Priest and governors of the Jews, as well as to the Gentiles: therefore, though he shewed himself openly after his resurrection, and to so many, and at sundry times, and by such infallible proofs, as to confirm the truth of it past all possibility of a deceit, or ground of scruple to after ages; yet he shewed not himself openly to all the people, (Acts, x. 40, 41.) That would have set the whole world in a flame all on the sudden, who were not prepared; for they knew not as yet the design of his kingdom, that it was to be spiritual and heavenly, till he should in a long tract of time, and by degrees, bring over the whole kingdom of the earth to his subjection, in the belief of his Gospel, not by force of arms (for that could not have done it,) but according to the full freedom of their own wills, by a rational conviction.

And it is observable, that though one great article of the apostolical office, at first, was particularly to be witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, (Acts, i. 22;) that this, at first, was necessary to the constitution of an apostle, and therefore Christ did shew himself in a miraculous manner to Saint Paul, to qualify him for that office; yet, as himself says, it was last of all, as one born out of due time; for he was constituted to be the apostle of the Gentiles, who came in to the Gospel "last of all, as born out of due time," (1 Cor. xv. 8.)

And he was the only man among the apostles who had acquired learning by study and education; therefore he was not admitted till the Gospel had been first preached by the others, and fully established; and he was at first a persecutor of it, to take away the least suspicion that his parts or learning had any share in the contrivance of the Gospel; and then his coming in at last did remove the prejudice, that no men of learning and sagacity had embraced it: he broke the ice for the Gentiles, who were admirers of learning, and for this they valued him the more, and hearkened to him.

I could enlarge in many other particulars, indeed in every particular, through the whole economy of the Gospel, to shew the wonderful conduct and most minute proportion that there is in every part, which of itself were sufficient to convince any considering person, that the whole contrivance was divine, and that no lesser wisdom could have so disposed of it.

But that would require a treatise by itself; and thus much I thought necessary for my present subject, to shew how we Gentiles were drawn into the belief of the Gospel, by the cords of a man, by such methods as overcame our reason, without destroying the

freedom of our will; such as give us the utmost demonstration of the wisdom and goodness of God, without the interposition of his almighty power, by which he governs the unthinking part of his creation.

And as the Jews first brought us into the Gospel, so would we now provoke them to emulation by the same methods in which God has dealt with us, by shewing them the beauty, the harmony, and irrefragable demonstration of fact, that has convinced us of the truth of the Gospel.

The infidelity of so many of you Jews was necessary (as shewed before) towards our receiving of the Gospel, till "the fulness of the Gentiles should come in."

And if "the casting away of you be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of you be, but life from the dead?" Amen. (Rom. xi. 15.)

XVI. Let me now conclude, and apply all that has been said, by a short recapitulation and enforcement of the principal parts of it.

You have given up all the credibility that there is for the truth of Moses and your Law, rather than admit of the same credibility (and stronger) that there is for Christ and the Gospel; so that, as said before, and has been proved, you have involved yourselves under the necessity, either of rejecting Moses, or embracing of Christianity.

Your objections have been answered *ex abundanti;* for after the full proof of the miracles of Christ and his apostles, there needed no more to have been said, as to receiving the doctrine which they taught, and those expositions they gave of the Law; which stand upon as sure a foundation, and carry the same infallible credentials of divine authority, at the Law itself.

And these cannot be overthrown by never so great a cloud of difficulties or objections, though they could not be answered to satisfaction, without disproving the motives of credibility upon which they are received.

For we may have sufficient reason to believe many things, and yet not be able to solve all the difficulties that may arise concerning them.

As in natural things, we cannot explain the manner and conveyance of sensible objects, through our outward organs to our soul; nor the thousandth part of those difficulties which are started concerning the soul itself; yet no man doubts but that he has a soul, that he sees, hears, thinks, reasons, &c.

So in supernatural things. Who can solve all that may be asked concerning the being and operations of God? yet all this is no argument against the belief of a First Cause, and its essential perfections, because it is forced upon us by undeniable reason.

Therefore, unless you can shew the fallacy of those four marks which, in the "Method with the Deists," are set down to ascertain the truth of matters of fact, or, secondly, shew that the matters of fact of Christ want any of them, all your objections, borrowed from other topics, can signify nothing against the truth of Christianity.

And if you can shew the uncertainty of these marks, or that they are wanting to the evidence of Christianity; then down comes your Law with it, and we must altogether turn Deists.

You say (as has been before quoted, p. 27,) that if Christ, after he rose from the dead, had appeared to the whole congregation of Israel, &c. that this would have removed all scruple from you, and that you would, without all doubt, have believed him.

And now, I beseech you, have you not had as miraculous confirmation of him as even this which you require? Was not the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon him at his baptism, and the audible voice from heaven, before all the people, telling them from the mouth of God, This is my beloved Son, &c.—was not this a much stronger indication from God, than if a man, formerly dead, had appeared? Might not one man be like another? Have not many been deceived upon that point? Were not the apostles hardly brought to believe it, even by many miracles? Would there not be more questions to be asked in that case, than in such a visible apparition from heaven, before the eyes of so many people, and of words spoke from heaven in all their hearing?

Our blessed Saviour said to some of your fathers, "That if they heard not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead," (Luke, xvi. 31.) And the reason is plain, because the proofs for Moses, &c. are more indubitable than the apparition of a dead man.

But do you want even this proof? Did not Christ appear, after his resurrection, to above five hundred of your fathers at once? and has not this been attested by a multitude of miracles wrought by those of your fathers who saw him, who eat with him, and conversed forty days with him after he rose from the dead? Did he not appear to Paul from heaven after his ascension? if not, would not some of those Jews who then journeyed with him, who saw that light above the brightness of the sun, and heard the voice, though not the distinct words of him that spoke to Paul—who were struck down to the earth, and greatly terrified, who saw Paul struck blind upon the spot, and led him by the hand into Damascus,—would none of these have discovered the cheat, if all this story had been a mere invention and forgery of Paul's? Would none of these have done it, who were so far from being favourable to the Christian side, that they were then going along with Paul to persecute that way, even unto the death? Would they

not have done it, when Paul trumpt it up, and the Christians laid such stress upon it, that it is told at large in three several places of the Acts? (chap. ix. xxii. and xxvi.) when Paul, within three days, began to preach Christ in Damascus, and confounded the Jews there, where those who journeyed with him were then present, and might have confounded him, if they had denied that matter of fact, when he adduced them as witnesses of it? But above all, the miracles which Paul wrought, as great even as this, do vouch his truth in this matter; seeing they are deduced to us, with all the four marks before mentioned, which do infallibly demonstrate the certainty of any matter of fact.

Moreover, consider that all these witnesses to the resurrection of Christ were Jews, and none other. It has been before observed, that Christ preached to none but the Jews before his death; so after his resurrection, he shewed himself to none other but to them. And from the Jews only have we Gentiles received the knowledge of his resurrection, and of all the Gospel. This is a tradition of the Jews, and deduced through a greater number of them and their posterities, (as before has been shewn,) than there are Jews who now stand out against it. These reject the tradition of their fathers, upon which they now lay the whole stress of their religion; and are proof against those convictions which have converted the Gentiles. The Christian Jews did not set up Christ for their Messiah; they chose not him, but he chose them, (Joh. xv. 16.) They knew him not to be the Messiah, till they were convinced by many miracles; they understood not the nature of his kingdom, but were brought by him from their notion of reigning, to that of suffering with him upon the earth; therefore these are to be less suspected than those others of your fathers, who set up Messiahs for themselves, in hopes to reign with them in the land of Canaan; and have been as often deceived, and suffered miserable destruction by it.

But, as before has been argued, there is no such visible means in the world to bring them to that temporal grandeur which they expect; and the nation of the Jews to that universal honour, supereminence, and dominion through the whole earth, as their conversion to Christianity. Then will Christ be not only "a light to the Gentiles," but "the glory of his people Israel."

But chiefly, and above all, I earnestly recommended to you Jews the consideration of your eternal state, towards which you expect no benefit from your Messiah; and yet without whom you can give no account how you shall be delivered and purged from those sins, for which there were no sacrifices or expiation under the Law, as has been discoursed before.

There was none for those who "fled to the cities of refuge," (Num. xxxv. 25, 28.) Nothing could deliver them from thence, but "the death of the high priest," which was a plain type, that nothing but the death of our great High Priest can deliver us from the guilt of sin. The like parallel might be carried on through every branch of your Law, pointing to the Messiah; but that would divert too much. You have only a few instances here; the whole would take up a discourse longer than all I have written to you.

I wish even the temporal glory of Israel; and should rejoice that, in the day of their conversion, I should be found among those who are sprung from their stock, and shall exult to reassume our ancient and most honourable name of Jews.

And let the chiefest glory, as in heaven, so on earth, be to those of you, who shall lead the way, and be instrumental in the restoration of the families of Jacob.

Towards which I will, with these my small endeavours, join my hearty prayers, made more effectual as offered up in the communion of the holy Catholic Church; that part of it especially in England, which prays for you on this blessed day, to your God and our God, through the mediation and satisfaction made for us by your and our only Messiah; and after his holy example, who this day poured forth his blood, with his prayers for you upon the cross. O Lord, that this were the time when they should be heard! Amen. Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Good Friday, 1698.

THE END.

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THE

AUTHENTICITY, UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION, AND CREDIBILITY

OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY GODFREY LESS,

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TRANSLATED FROM THE LAST EDITION OF THE GERMAN

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OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE subject of the Work now offered to the Public, in an English translation, is an examination of the following questions:—Whether the books of the New Testament were really written by the persons to whom they are ascribed? Whether they have descended to us perfectly uncorrupted, in all essential matters, as they left the hands of their authors? And, lastly, Whether they contain a narration of events which did actually take place?

That this inquiry is of the greatest consequence, and demands our most impartial attention, will be evident from these considerations:—That if we cannot answer the above questions in the affirmative, then is the Christian religion a cunningly devised fable; but, on the contrary, if, in result of the examination, it should be found that the New Testament is both genuine and authentic,—then it will require but few arguments to shew, that the miracles contained in it are true, that the writers were inspired persons, and that our holy faith is a revelation of the will of God.

On this subject the learned author of the following Work, Dr Less, had himself entertained doubts during many years of his life: for his own private satisfaction he instituted a severe and rigid inquiry: the result is exhibited to the Public in the present treatise; and to himself the consequence was a solid, rational, and satisfactory conviction. The original was put into my hands, during my residence in Germany, by a person of distinguished worth. On perusal, it appeared to me extremely well calculated, from its conciseness, perspicuity, and severity of examination, to produce the same effect on others, and to be of service to the Christian cause; as I cannot conceive it possible for any man, who honestly and impartially seeks after truth, to read it with the attention which the subject demands, without receiving the same conviction which the author himself obtained. This opinion of the original work first led me to form the design of translating it into my native language.

Few are the writers who have expressly treated on the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, and fewer still who have done it in a manner always satisfactory to the reader. Du Pin is miserably defective; and Jones seems to have been anxious rather to shew that certain writings are apocryphal, than to prove that the books of the New Testament are canonical. Indeed, he has passed over all the Epistles and the Apocalypse without paying the least regard to them.

But since his time Dr Lardner has employed immense labour and profound erudition on the same subject: nor do I know any man to whom the Christian world has more obligations than to the author of the *Credibility of the Gospel History*. He appears to have almost exhausted his subject, and to have rendered any subsequent undertaking of a similar nature perfectly unnecessary. Instead of giving my own opinion on the difference between the present treatise and the voluminous work of Lardner, I will lay before the reader the sentiments of the great Michælis, and of the Rev. Herbert Marsh, one of the most accurate theological scholars that any age or country has ever produced. "The best treatises," says Michælis, "upon this subject [the authenticity of the New Testament] are Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*, and Less's *Truth of the Christian Religion*, [the subject of the following sheets.] The former of these works, which has been censured for its prolixity, contains a very large collection of testimonies from the fathers and other ancient writers, and is highly valuable to those who would examine the whole series of evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament. The works of Lardner have been less read than they deserve: every one interested in this inquiry should possess them, were it only for occasional reference, and they are indispensable to a clergyman, who cannot remain indifferent on so important a subject, and whose duty is not only to believe, but to be convinced. The latter of these works is more agreeable to read, because prolixity is avoided, and it is easy to oversee the whole chain of reasoning at a single view. Various testimonies which Lardner had quoted, are omitted by Less, because they were not sufficiently convincing, and he has supplied what Lardner had omitted. Every reader will remark, in perusing this treatise, what I have learnt in frequent conversation with the author, that it is the result of a conscientious,

even anxiously conscientious inquiry, which he had instituted for his own private conviction. Doubts on which Lardner never thought, he has felt and proved." Thus far Michælis: and his learned translator has borne his testimony to the value of the present work in a note to the passage just quoted: "It would be impossible," says he, "to give an abridgment of it in these notes, as the author himself is very concise: but the whole deserves to be translated in a separate work." To the testimony of such authorities I will add nothing: that which has obtained the praise of Michælis, and the recommendation of Marsh, needs no farther panegyric.

I have only to say a few words in respect to the translation. It is made from the last edition of the original printed at Gottingen, 1786, and is always, it is hoped, faithful to the sense of the author, and generally as literal as the peculiar idioms of the different languages will allow. The whole work of Dr Less, which is called by the general name of *Geschichte der Religion*, or *History of Religion*, is comprised in three volumes. The first is employed on the history of both Natural and Revealed Religion. In the second, the divine origin of Christianity is proved at large. And the third is occupied with the examination and refutation of objections to the Christian religion.

As the following treatise is taken from the body of a work of such magnitude, which is only divided according to the grand divisions of the subject, I conceived it necessary to alter its form by breaking it into the subdivisions of books, chapters, &c., in order that the connection of one part with another might be more readily perceived, and the whole more easily comprehended. From the same cause I have sometimes omitted a word, a sentence, or even a whole paragraph, which appeared unnecessary in the present inquiry, and had an evident reference to parts of the work unconnected with the subject of these sheets.

In the quotations from the Holy Scriptures, Less has frequently paraphrased the passage, from a desire to convey the sense without retaining the obsolete phraseology of the authorized translation of his country. It was my wish to have always adhered literally to our English version; but, as a translator, I have been obliged, in order to retain my author's argument, to retain the form in which it is conveyed, and have therefore been sometimes compelled to render his paraphrase word for word, when I could not introduce the common version.

I have ventured, in one or two cases, to change the examples adduced by the author for others more familiar to an English reader; these are so unimportant that I do not think it necessary to indicate the particular instances.

However unimportant in point of magnitude may be the present work, yet it contains a large body of information. The subject matter, which, if dilated in the modern fashion, would fill a folio, is here condensed into one small volume. This conciseness has tended to render the style of the original extremely inelegant; and may perhaps have had a similar effect on the translation. To which must be added, that conceiving perspicuity in a work of this kind to be a paramount quality, I have studied to make my book rather lucid than elegant, and have been more anxious that the reader should be convinced by the solidity of the argument, than delighted by the beauty of the expression.

Some time since I had formed an intention of publishing in the English language Dr Less's larger work *On the Truth of the Christian Religion*, and had made no small progress in the translation: that intention I have relinquished for the present; whether at any future period I may renew the design, will depend on causes which are not under my direction.

THE

AUTHENTICITY, UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION, AND CREDIBILITY

OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

PART I.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.

OF THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE NECESSITY OF THIS INQUIRY.

The faith of Christians is thus distinguished from all the other religions of the world,—It pronounces Jesus to be the Redeemer of men, promised by God, the only cause of their salvation, and asserts his doctrine to be undeniably true. Should there, then, never have existed in the world a person, who, in the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus, was born at Bethlehem, of Mary, a Jewish virgin, and known to his countrymen by the name of Jesus; should this Jesus never have performed any miracles, in order to prove the truth of his doctrines; should he not have arisen from the dead; should he, lastly, have never uttered any true prophecies; then the articles of the Christian faith are without doubt a forgery. But should these facts be incontrovertibly true, then it is equally incontrovertible, that the religion of Christians is also true. The Christian religion, therefore, is founded on facts, and consequently must be proved in the same manner as we prove the truth of other historical subjects.

The evidences which Christians adduce for the truth of these facts, are contained in the books of the New Testament. The authors of these books are the witnesses on whose credit Christians believe that history. If, therefore, the credibility of these authors, and of their writings, can be as strictly proved as the credibility of a Tacitus, Livy, Thuanus, or Burnet, then we must either give up the greatest, most beautiful, and most useful part of human knowledge, the whole of history, together with all its various branches, or we must confess, that the books of the New Testament, in all natural and not miraculous subjects, are worthy of credit.

I acknowledge, that should the credibility of the writers of the New Testament be brought even to the very highest degree of historical certainty, that the historical truth of the miracles they relate would not be thereby proved. An author may be in the highest degree worthy of credit, and yet may sometimes be overcome by the weakness incident to human nature, and relate absurdities, or forged miracles, as undoubted truths. We believe him in general; but if he relate palpable absurdities, sound reason becomes an evidence against him, and her decision is infinitely more to be depended upon, than the credibility of any author whatever. We believe him in general; but if he relate miracles, then his credit alone is not sufficient justly to challenge our assent. The more uncommon an event is, so much more weighty must be the proofs for it. If it be a real miracle, then it demands a perfectly peculiar kind of proof, of which I shall speak, when I treat of the "Truth of the Christian Religion." According to these principles we decide on all historical writings. We acknowledge Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Tacitus, and Livy, to be perfectly credible authorities. Nevertheless, when they speak of a certain divine vapour which arose from the earth, and instilled into men a perfect knowledge of all futurity; or of a ring

around the nose, out of which the devil was driven; or when they inform us, that the statue of Jupiter spoke and perspired; that it rained blood; that the Emperor Vespasian, by a mere touch, gave sight to a blind man; in such cases we claim the privilege of refusing our belief, or at least of entirely passing them over as doubtful.

There are no other rules enabling us to judge of the writings of the New Testament, than those by which we judge of any other historical work. Now we are accustomed to establish the credibility of a book in the following manner:—We first prove the authenticity of the book itself, and then the credibility of its author. Two things belong to the proof of the authenticity; first, that the book was really written by the pretended author; and secondly, that it is come down to us perfectly uncorrupted as it left the hands of its author. In this manner we decide on all historical writings; and men are unanimously agreed, that it is as unreasonable to receive an evidence which cannot be proved in this way, as to reject that which has endured these proofs. A man of accuracy and integrity will never attempt to prove the truth of an event, which is pretended to have happened in the first century, from what are called the writings of Dionysius, the Areopagite: for the name of Dionysius which they bear is forged, and they were not composed until the fifth or sixth centuries. Nor will he, like Whiston, believe any thing on the authority of the larger epistles of Ignatius. Ignatius did indeed write epistles; but whatever exists in the larger, that is not found in the smaller, (and even these appear to be not absolutely free from all interpolation,) is the addition of a more modern hand. Orosius is no credible evidence for the truth of events, which are pretended to have taken place at the birth of Jesus; nor will a critic assert any thing on the credit of Simeon Metaphrastes. The former did not write until the fifth century: and the latter is extremely credulous, and much to be suspected: neither of them, therefore, deserves to be esteemed a credible evidence.

Can, then, the three following propositions be proved:—First, That the New Testament was really written by the pretended contemporaries of Jesus; secondly, That it is come down to us uncorrupted; and thirdly, That the authors of it are evidences of credibility; still we cannot, on their credit alone, prove the truth of the miracles they relate; but thus much will be evident, that Jesus did really preach the doctrine acknowledged by Christians; that he was really born at Bethlehem, taught publicly in Judea, in the reign of Tiberius. In a word, all the events which are natural, and not miraculous, must be considered as incontestably true, on the authority of these evidences alone.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE INTERNAL TRACES OF AUTHENTICITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

When Lord Bolingbroke,[1] in his *Letters on History*, is pointing out the necessity of this study to a theologian, he reproaches the defenders of Christianity, that they are accustomed to transcribe from each other, and thereby perpetuate the errors which have been inadvertently admitted, or the fallacies which have been purposely contrived. "Abbadie," these are his own words, "says, in his famous book, that the Gospel of Saint Matthew is cited by Clemens, Bishop of Rome, a disciple of the apostles; that Barnabas cites it in his epistle; that Ignatius and Polycarp receive it; and that the same fathers, that give testimony for Matthew, give it likewise for Mark. If the fathers of the first century do mention some passages that are agreeable to what we read in our evangelists, will it follow that these fathers had the same gospels before them? To say so is a manifest abuse of history, and quite inexcusable in writers that knew, or should have known, that these fathers made use of other gospels, wherein such passages might be contained, or they might be preserved in unwritten tradition. Besides which I could almost venture to affirm, that these fathers of the first century do not expressly name the Gospels we have of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John." These assertions, which in some respects are well founded, render it of the greatest importance to every enlightened Christian, carefully to examine the evidence of the ecclesiastical writers of the first centuries on this subject.

In this inquiry we are principally concerned with the period of the three first centuries, that is, from the times of the apostles down to Origen. For he has given us the first perfect catalogue of the Scriptures of the New Testament; and since his time these catalogues or canons, and the evidences for each of the books of the New Testament, are so numerous, that it would be perfectly superfluous to attempt to prove, that since the fourth century, the very same books of the New Testament were held by Christians to be divine, which we at present confess to be such.[2] Moreover, subsequent information is inadequate to establish the authenticity of the Scriptures of the New Testament. It is too recent, and the foregoing centuries were too replete with spurious and forged works, to

[1] Letter V. vol. ii. p. 349—351, of the 4to. edition.

[2] These canons are found according to the order of the centuries, in Gerhardi de Mastricht *Canon Ecclesiasticus Scripturæ Sacræ*. The latest and best edition of this work is that of Jena, 1725, in 8vo.

be capable of instructing us confidently what writings were actually composed by the disciples of Jesus in the first century. But of so much greater consequence to us is the period of the three first centuries; and it is a very great error in the defenders of Christianity, when they, either by contenting themselves merely with the well known evidences of Eusebius, or by producing quotations from the primitive writers, which are perfectly indeterminate, or by accumulating such passages from them as have only a similitude in words and sentiments, bring a suspicion on the whole proof for the authenticity, and consequently also for the divinity, of these books.

Whoever has been much engaged with the writings of antiquity, its modes of thinking and manners, will instantly perceive, on reading these books, that they are not the work of an impostor, but that they were composed about the first century of the Roman monarchy, just as a connoisseur in the fine arts will immediately see whether a painting, a statue, or a gem, be the production of antiquity, an original, or merely a copy, and of a modern age. In the Scriptures of the New Testament there cannot be discovered the smallest trace of deceit or forgery. On the contrary, the character of the pretended times of their composition, and of their pretended authors, is so deeply impressed on them, that a critic, by a mere perusal, will discover their authenticity.

It must appear remarkable to any one who has ever employed himself in distinguishing the genuine remains of antiquity from the spurious, that in these writings there cannot be found the smallest vestige of a forgery. What are called the *Canones* and *Constituitones Apostolorum*, speak of altars, of the ordination of bishops and priests, of the subjection of the Holy Ghost to the Son. The pretended writings of Dionysius, a member of the Court of Areopagus, refute Nestorian and Anthropomorphitic errors; use the word ὑποστασις in the doctrine of the Trinity; and speak of monks, altars, and liturgies. And, in the same manner, all interpolated writings contain something or other, a custom, a science, an expression, which betrays a later age, and does not escape the eye of the critic. On the contrary, we cannot meet with any thing in the Scriptures of the New Testament, which does in the least degree contradict the pretended character, time, and connection of their authors. And not only this: we discover in them such traces of genuineness as are indeed extremely striking.

The writers of the New Testament are said to have been Jews by birth, and of the Jewish religion; and this is every where visible. The mode of relating their story, so unaffected, and mixed with various superfluous phrases, and trifling collateral circumstances; the numerous allusions to the religious ceremonies of the Jews; the subject matter interwoven with words, phrases, and thoughts of the Old Testament; the numerous parables and allegories; the variety of Hebraic words, constructions, and phrases in the Greek of the New Testament, betray an author to whom the Jewish mode of thinking was quite natural.

They are said to have lived in the first century of the Roman monarchy. This also is easily and every where perceptible. The exact division of the Jewish state; its connection with the Romans; the internal transactions and fermentations which took place in it at the time of the first Roman emperors, are not so properly related by the writer as presupposed as matters of fact, which were universally known at the time when he wrote. The little unimportant, foreign events of the first century, which in the books of the New Testament, and especially in the historical, are touched on only casually and very slightly, in so unstudied and unaffected a manner, evince a writer, to whose memory these facts were still quite recent, and who presupposed that his contemporaries were as well acquainted with them as himself. I shall give examples of this in the course of the work.

They are said to have been immediate witnesses of their narratives, or to have themselves seen and heard what they relate. Even this circumstance is every where clearly discoverable. They relate with the confidence of men who are convinced that their readers already know that they themselves saw and experienced all, and that their assertions may therefore be considered as proofs. They relate, without mentioning the eras of their history, or carefully characterizing the person of whom they make mention: in short, like men who wrote for readers that were their contemporaries, that lived at the very time in which their history happened, and knew, or might easily have known, the persons themselves.

They are said to have been all, except one, unlearned men. And who does not remark in the writings of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, Saint John, Saint Peter, Saint James, and Saint Jude, that they were composed by persons who were indeed perfectly certain of the facts they relate; possessed also of sound judgment, and in part of excellent natural talents, yet totally devoid of learning, and what is properly called science? We find in their works no profound inferences; no refutations which betray subtilty; no expression or similies taken from the walks of science; no acquired knowledge of the world. In every part the tone of an honest historian is perceptible, but of one to whom it never occurred to argue on his narrative as a philosopher. Compare their writings with those

of Saint Paul. If we even put out of the question the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is replete with Jewish learning; yet what profound inferences are drawn in the Epistle to the Romans?[4] What a variety of fine knowledge, and how much adroitness in defending himself with delicacy and subtilty against the accusations of his enemies, are betrayed in the Epistles to the Corinthians? With what acuteness does he oppose the doctrine of the necessity of circumcision, and of adherence to the Mosaic law, in the Epistle to the Galatians? (ch. iii. iv. v.) The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, contain a variety of similies taken from profane knowledge; allusions to foreign customs; a luxuriance of ideas; pathetic and strong refutations of accusations.[4] The Epistles to Timothy and Titus shew, in particular, a mind which, from experience and philosophic observation of the world, had obtained considerable legislative knowledge. And the Epistle to Philemon has almost, if I may be allowed to say it, the style of courtly urbanity.

If, therefore, we knew nothing of the real authors of these books, and were to form our judgment of them only from what we discover internally, we should suppose that they were written by native Jews, during the first century, and by immediate witnesses, and that only one of them was a scholar. This matter deserves a more ample inquiry.

The Scriptures of the New Testament are composed in the Greek language. This agrees very accurately with the accounts we have of their authors, and of the time and design of their composition. The Greek language was at that period, in the first century of the Roman monarchy, and had been since Alexander the Great, a kind of universal language, just as the French is at present. It was understood and spoken by Greeks, by Romans, and by Jews. The greater part of the Christians also, especially of those to whom the epistles of the New Testament are addressed, would not have comprehended them so universally in any other language. At Corinth, Thessalonica, Colosse, and in Galatia, scarcely was another language understood. Besides the Latin and Aramæan tongues, the Greek also was understood at Rome, and by the Jews in Palestine.

The Greek, in which the New Testament is written, is not pure and elegant Greek, such as was written by Plato, Xenophon, Polybius, or Plutarch; but is intermixed with many Hebraic significations, phrases, and constructions. It resembles pure classical Greek as much, probably, as the French or German, written or spoken by a native Englishman, which must be constantly mixed with some Anglicisms, resembles the languages of Dresden or of Paris. This is a very striking mark of the authenticity of these writings. Had the Greek of the New Testament been pure, elegant, classical, it would be evident that the writers were either native Greeks, or scholars who had studied Greek; as the writings of Philo or Flavius Josephus betray the scholar. But since we find it intermixed with many peculiarities belonging exclusively to the Hebrew or Chaldee, and Syriac, (the two languages spoken in common life by the Jews of Palestine,) it is evident, from this Hebraic Greek, that the writers were unlearned, and Jews by birth.

The Scriptures of the New Testament are composed in a style which very evidently betrays that their authors were born and educated in the Jewish religion. We find in them constant allusions to offerings, priests, the temple, articles of dress, and other parts of the Jewish divine service. The sentiments of the Old Testament are rather interwoven into the body of them, than quoted. To make Jesus a sin-offering; to sprinkle with the blood of Jesus; to be born again; to be a temple of God: who does not recognize the Jew in these expressions? When, in the Epistle to the Romans, (viii. 36.) the then existing sufferings and persecutions of the Christians are described in the words of the forty-fourth Psalm—"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter:" when the murder of the infants at Bethlehem (Matth. ii. 17, 18,) is told also in the language of Jeremiah—"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted:" when the writer of the Epistle to the Romans (xv. 20, 21) expresses the common sentiment, that he taught Christianity in no place where another had already taught before him, with a passage from the Old Testament—"I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named—but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard, shall understand." What attentive reader will not discern from such constant and unsolicited accommodations of the phraseology of the Old Testament, a writer to whom the religious language of the Jews was, as it were, a mother-tongue?

The Scriptures of the New Testament are all, except those which bear the name of Saint Paul, very evidently written in a style totally devoid of all cultivation, and with the simplicity of unlearned men. We do not find in them any profound inferences, acute refutations, studied knowledge of the world, or any expressions or comparisons taken from astronomy, physics, anatomy, poesy, archi-

[3] Particularly v. 9.

[4] For example, Eph. ii. 20—22; iii. 14—19; iv. 9, 10; v. 3; vi. 10—17. Philip. ii. 17. Coloss. ii. 14—18. 1 Thess. iv. 13—18, &c.

tecture, or, indeed, from any of the arts or sciences. On the contrary, the writers relate, teach, exhort, exactly as men of sound understanding and good principles, but devoid of any cultivation or learning, would relate, teach, and exhort. Common expressions of common life; various repetitions, and circumstances perfectly superfluous; a want of strict connection and method; a faulty construction; these constitute the language of men, whose intellectual powers may be sound, indeed, but entirely uncultivated.

Not less worthy of remark is the accuracy of many individual circumstances of their narrative. Jesus, they say, was born under the Roman Emperor Augustus, began his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and was put to death about three years and a half afterwards; that on the feast of the Passover, Pilate, a Roman governor, condemned him to death; that Saint Paul defended himself before the Roman governors, Festus and Felix, before the Jewish King Agrippa, &c. An impostor would not write so circumstantially.

There are, moreover, certain historical circumstances respecting the political and religious constitutions of the world mentioned in the Scriptures of the New Testament, which point out incontestably the time when they were written. Palestine is divided into three provinces—Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. This country at that time is subject to the Romans, but had been heretofore ruled by its own kings; the Jews have not the absolute power of life and death; at Jerusalem is a Roman governor. The nation is discontented with the Roman sovereignty, refuses to pay tribute, and is inclined to revolt. Two religious sects have the principal sway among them, namely, the Pharisees and the Sadducees; the former, who teach a mechanical religion, deceive and tyrannize over the people, and yet are almost idolized by them; the latter, who adopt an Epicurean philosophy, are strongly supported by the principal characters of the nation. The temple of Jerusalem is still standing, and is annually visited by a great number of the Jews who are scattered abroad in different parts of the world. These, and similar circumstances, are rather presupposed as universally known, than related by the authors of these writings; and they agree most exactly with the condition of the Jews, and the Roman empire, in the first century of the Roman monarchy. More will be said on this subject hereafter, in the inquiry into the credibility of these writers.

BOOK II.

THE EXTERNAL OR DECISIVE EVIDENCE FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, NAMELY, THE POSITIVE TESTIMONIES OF WITNESSES IN THE THREE FIRST CENTURIES.

CHAPTER I.

WITNESSES IN THE FIRST CENTURY.

NOTWITHSTANDING what has been said above, I confess that it is not absolutely impossible but that a man of very great talents and extensive learning might, as it were, absolutely forget himself; might for a time lay aside his natural modes of thinking and manners, and change himself into a perfectly different person. But the testimonies of the oldest and most credible writers place it beyond all doubt, that the books of our New Testament were written by the pretended authors, Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, Saint John, Saint Paul, Saint Peter, Saint James, and Saint Jude, and at the pretended times.

In this proof I shall quote such passages only, wherein these writers appeal either by name, or expressly, to those books; and honestly confess the doubts which, to an impartial searcher after truth, will occur in this inquiry. I shall thus hinder the enemies of Christianity from using that argument which Bolingbroke has brought against it;[1] and if in this examination nothing be overcharged; but, on the contrary, if the love of truth, and the strictest severity of inquiry, be every where discoverable, additional weight, I trust, will be given to my proof.

SECT. I.—THE ORIGIN AND STATE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE FIRST CENTURY.

Jesus, the Christ, was born in the forty-first year of the government of the Roman Emperor Augustus, consequently four years earlier than the commonly received computation, or one thousand eight hundred and eight years before the present time: he taught personally during three years and a half in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee; and at his death left one hundred and fifty followers of his religion, who were all persons of low birth, and entirely destitute of that consequence which learning or temporal greatness can bestow, (Acts, i.) About seven weeks after his death, the twelve men, who had been his most intimate friends, began to preach his religion in the world. On the first day of their preaching, they established in Jerusalem a community of Christians, consisting of more than three thousand persons,

[1] See above, p. 8.

(Acts, ii) And in less than sixty years there existed numerous and flourishing communities of Christians in Asia, as well in the eastern parts towards Persia and India, on the Ganges, as in the western ; in Africa, at Alexandria and other places ; and in Europe, in Macedonia, Greece, nay, even at Rome, at that time the metropolis of the world. Thus, at the end of the first century, that small unknown fountain, the parent community at Jerusalem, was become a stream, which had spread itself over every part of the known globe.

These Christian communities formed and supported themselves, notwithstanding the opposition of the whole then existing world. The Jews arose against their members, who taught the abolition of that law which they almost idolized, and represented him whom they had crucified as the Teacher and Saviour of the world. They were then, as at present, dispersed over all the regions of the known earth ; and wherever the Christians came, there they found powerful, enraged, and cruel enemies. To complete their misery, the Emperor Nero declared himself also against them, and put many of them to death by means the most terrible. Thus oppressed and persecuted on all sides, they could neither confess and practise their religion openly, nor establish any external union among themselves ; but every separate community was necessitated to endeavour to govern and to support itself in the best manner it was able. Even in this infant state of Christianity, there arose a formal schism among themselves : the disciples, who had been formerly Jews, insisted on retaining their paternal law, and mixed with Christianity the ceremonies of Judaism ; while the Gentile converts considered the abolition of the law of Moses to be an essential article of the new religion, and would be guided by the doctrine of Jesus Christ alone, (Acts, xv. ; Rom. xiv.)

SECT. II. — THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

This want of external union was supplied in a certain degree by different writings, circulated among them by their teachers, of which the greater part is now lost. Only five works, which make pretensions to that early age, are come down to us ; and these bear the names of five men, at that time very celebrated, Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. They are called apostolical fathers,[1] because they were the immediate disciples of the apostles. Their high antiquity, and still more their perfect acquaintance with the apostles, render them particularly important to us in our present inquiry.

1. *Barnabas.*

Barnabas was appointed, in conjunction with Saint Paul, the most eminent of the first preachers of Christianity, to publish the religion of Christ among the Gentiles, after they had made many thousand converts among the Jews and Samaritans,[1] (Acts, xiii. 2, 3 ;) and is not only placed on a perfect equality with him,[2] but is also expressly styled an apostle.[3] He left behind him an epistle, which, according to Clement of Alexandria,[4] Origen,[5] Eusebius,[6] and Jerome,[7] was held in the greatest esteem by the ancients. But whether the work, which we now have under this name,[8] be the very same which Barnabas wrote, and the above mentioned men read, is here unimportant, since it quotes, as we shall see hereafter, not a single passage of the New Testament. It contains, indeed, now the same passages which Clement and Origen have cited from it. But the unnatural mode of interpretation, (known by the name of mystical,) which prevails in it ; the fables of the Hyæna, &c. which the author believed ; and the assertion that the world would be destroyed in its six thousandth year, which is directly contradictory to the assurances of the New Testament, that the time when it should take place was perfectly unknown, make it certain, that this epistle was not written by that Barnabas, who was an apostle. Nevertheless, the most learned in ancient history are agreed, that it was composed not later than the second century.[9] And we may allow thus much to the testimonies of the primitive

[1] The most complete and accurate edition of these works is that which was edited by John Baptist Cotelier, under the title, "S. S. Patrum, qui temporibus Apostolorum floruerunt, Barnabæ, Clementis, Hermæ, Ignatii, Polycarpi, opera vera et supposititia. Una cum Clementis, Ignatii, Polycarpi Actis atque Martyriis ;" to which he has added very learned annotations and dissertations. The last and best edition is that of Amsterdam, 1724, 2 vols. folio, published under the inspection of John Le Clerc. Besides the annotations of the editor, it contains a variety of new and important additions, which are mentioned in the title. Le Clerc himself has pointed out the advantages of this edition in the "Biblioth. Ancienne et Mod." tom. xxi. part ii. p. 237, seq. An useful abridgment of these writings is to be found in Rösler's "Library of the Ecclesiastical Fathers."

[2] Acts, xiii. 2, 3, 46, 47 ; 1 Cor. ix. 4—7.

[3] Acts, xiv. 14. Compare verse 4.

[4] Stromata, lib. ii. cap. 20, p. 490. Lib. v. cap. 8, p. 677 ; cap. 10, pp. 683, 684. Potter's edit. Oxford, 715 fol. In these places Clement cites whole passages from the epistle of Barnabas, which are likewise found in that which we have at present.

[5] De Principiis, lib. iii. cap. 4. p. 140, and contra Celsum, lib. i. cap. 63, p. 378. Charles de la Rue, and Charles Vincent De la Rue, have edited at Paris all the genuine works of Origen, which are still extant, 1733—1759, 4 vols. folio. The passages pointed out above are in tom. i. For an account of this edition of Origen, see Ernesti Theol. Biblioth. vol. vii. p. 371.

[6] Histor. Eccles. lib. vi. cap. 13, 14, pp. 272, 273, vol. i. edit. Gulielmi Reading, who has edited together the Ecclesiastical Histories of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Evagrius, Philostorgius, and Theodorus. Cambridge, 720, 3 vol. folio.

[7] De Vir. illustr. cap. 6.

[8] See Coteler. Patr. Apostolic. vol. i. p. 15—66.

[9] See Rösler's "Library of the Ecclesiastical Fathers," i. 1.

writers, that it was written by a Christian teacher, of the name of Barnabas.

The principal design of this epistle, is to inculcate the proposition which Saint Paul in his writings so often repeats, and labours so anxiously to prove, namely, that Christians are free from all obligation to the law of Moses. But the author no where refers to this apostle. Saint Paul had already at that time written all his epistles: he composed the last (the Second to Timothy) during his second imprisonment at Rome, in the year of Christ sixty-seven; and Barnabas wrote his in the year seventy. They could not have been unknown to him who was the fellow-apostle and assistant of Saint Paul. This is another argument which tends to prove that this epistle, even if composed by a certain Barnabas, did not come from the celebrated apostle of that name.

To him who reads this epistle without any intention of producing testimonies from it in support of the Scriptures of the New Testament, scarcely any will be perceptible. What might be produced with the greatest appearance of probability, are two passages which have been generally brought forward as an evidence for the Gospel of Saint Matthew.[10] Barnabas is speaking in the seventh chapter of the sufferings of Christ, and delivers this as one of his sayings:—"They who will see me and obtain my kingdom, must receive me with many sufferings and afflictions."[11] And in the fourth chapter he introduces, "Many are called, but few chosen," as the declaration of certain divine Scriptures. For he makes use of a phrase which was commonly employed by the Jews when they quoted their sacred books, "It is written, Let us beware," says he,[12] "lest it should happen to us, as it is written, There are many called, few chosen."

These passages, it is true, exist in the same, or in very similar words, in the Gospel of Saint Matthew. But our author does not point out, by a single word, by whom those expressions were written, or where they are to be found. The first passage does not even prove that the declaration of Christ alluded to, had been taken from any written information. He might, with equal probability, have received it from the oral narration of the apostles. And with respect to the second, I find no trace that Barnabas means here expressly the Gospel of Saint Matthew. If a person, for example, should read in Plutarch —"We find it related, that the letter of Marcellus, on being received at Rome, did not alleviate the sorrow of the Romans, but rather instilled more terror into them;"[13] he would conclude from this passage, "that in the time of Plutarch, credible documents concerning the affairs of the Romans somewhere existed;" but he would not be inclined to prove from it, that Livy had written a Roman history.

If we cast our eyes on the catalogue of scriptural passages, which the apostolical fathers are said to have quoted, in the second volume of Cotelerius, and then reflect that their genuine remains are extremely short, we shall be induced to conclude, that these authors have done nothing else than copy the Bible. Lardner, indeed, is more rigid in the selection of these testimonies; yet the greater part of the passages which he has quoted are in no respect convincing. I will not delay the reader with the consideration of the other testimonies,[14] as I have shewn by the two passages which are generally dwelt upon as of the greatest weight, that Barnabas cannot be placed in the number of evidences for the authenticity of the New Testament.

2. *Clement of Rome.*

Under the name of Clement, who was Bishop of Rome, and an assistant of the Apostle Saint Paul, (Philip. iv. 3,) we have different writings; but of these only the two epistles to the Christian community at Corinth can offer any pretension to this title.

Of the second epistle, as it is called, there is only a fragment remaining,[1] which, nevertheless, exhibits pretty evident marks of forgery. Irenæus[2] was acquainted with only one epistle of Clement, and from this he has quoted. Eusebius[3] was indeed informed of this second epistle; but he rejects it, because he cannot discover any traces of it among the ancients. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, in the second

[10] See Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 14, 15, of the edition of his works published in 1788.

[11] Ὀυτω, φησιν, ὁι θελοντες με ιδειν και ἁψασθαι μου της βασιλειας, οφειλουσι θλιβεντες και παθοντες λαβειν με.—Cotel. p. 24.

[12] Almost the first five chapters are wanting in the original. Ir. the old Latin version the passage stand thus, p. 60:—"Adtendamus ergo, ne forte, sicut scriptum est, Multi vocati, pauci electi, inveniamur."

[13] This passage is actually found in the above mentioned author, in his life of Marcellus, *Vitar. Parall.* vol. ii. p. 273. edit. London, 729. in v. vol. 4to. He is speaking of a letter, in which the Proconsul comforts the Romans after a severe defeat which they had suffered from Hannibal, in this manner:—"For he himself was on his march to drive Hannibal out of the country,—Και ταυτα μεν, (continues Plutarch,) ὁ Λιβιος φησιν αναγνωσθεντα τα γεραμματα μη της λυπης αφελειν αλλα τω φοβω προσθειναι."

[14] Give to every one that asketh thee"—Παντι αιτουντι σε διδου, says Barnabas, ch. 19. It is pretended, that this is a proof of his having read the Gospel of Saint Matthew, because the same command is found in it, ch. v. 42. Dr Lardner himself perceives the weakness of this proof; and therefore says, p. 16, "It may be questioned, whether he refers at all to any written gospel."

[1] See Coteler. vol. i. 185—189. John Lewis Frey also has published an accurate edition of the works of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, (Basel. 1742, 8vo.) which I shall use for the purpose of quotation in the following work, on account of its conveniency. What remains of that which is called the second epistle, stands pp. 88—103.

[2] Adversus hæreses, lib. iii. cap. 3, § 3, p. 176, of the edition which was published at Paris, by Renatus Massuet, 1710, fol.

[3] Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. cap. 38. p. 134—ὁτι μη τους αρχαιους αυτη κεχρημενους ισμεν.

century, mentions only one epistle; and both Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, have quoted the first, but never noticed the second, as has been remarked by Grabe.[4] The tenor itself of this fragment betrays, that it is not the work of Clement: for it cites the Gospels often, and by name, which is universally contrary to the custom of the genuine epistle.[5]

But the testimonies of the ancients, for what is called the first epistle, are much more numerous and complete.[6] Besides the passages quoted above, we find in Eusebius, in two different places, very ample information concerning it. In the third book of the Ecclesiastical History, chap. xvi.[7] he says, "Of this Clement we have an important and excellent epistle, which is universally received as genuine. He wrote it in the name of the community at Rome to that at Corinth, in which great dissentions at that time existed. This epistle is read, as we know, agreeably to an old custom, in most of the churches. And that such dissentions did actually at that time exist at Corinth, Hegesippus is an incontrovertible evidence." The epistle, then, which the ancients held to be a genuine work of the Roman Clement, was written in the name of the community at Rome to the Christians at Corinth, on account of some dissentions which had arisen among them. In the thirty-eighth chapter of the same book, he points out the contents of that epistle more amply. "In this epistle," says he,[8] "Clement uses many sentiments taken from the epistle to the Hebrews; he even quotes some word for word: and hence it is manifest, that that epistle (to the Hebrews) is not a modern composition, but in all probability has been justly placed among the writings of the Apostle Saint Paul. This epistle which Saint Paul wrote to the Hebrews in their mother tongue, was translated, as some assert, by the Evangelist Saint Luke; or, according to the opinion of others, by this very Clement; and the latter supposition is the more probable, because the epistle of Clement, and that to the Hebrews, are written in a similar style, and the sentiments in both works tolerably well harmonize together."

The epistle which we still possess agrees accurately with this description. It is written in the name of the community at Rome to the Christians at Corinth, and to dissuade them from dissentions and factions, and particularly from an opposition to their presbyters or teachers. The importance and excellence which Eusebius, and the force which Irenæus, in the above mentioned passage, saw in it, must be ascribed to that inclination of the ancients to consider every thing as beautiful, excellent, and forcible, which came from a venerable teacher. The epistle, judged impartially, is written in a tedious style; the author repeats the same subject, probably ten times, without giving it additional force, is rich in unmeaning epithets, wrests scriptural passages to his purpose, and often extends a matter too far, in order to deduce from it an argument which he supposed good and edifying. Notwithstanding these defects, it is one of the most valuable remains of antiquity. Even its great age makes it respectable; for at the latest it was composed in the last ten years of the first century; most probably about the year 96.[9] The credit of its author, and particularly the circumstance of its having been written in the name of an entire and very considerable community, add extraordinary weight to its testimony. It thus becomes a public document, and contains, not the evidence of a private individual, but of the whole Church at Rome.

We must therefore greatly regret, that it now appears neither sufficiently correct nor perfect. Only a single manuscript of it is come down to us. In this some leaves are wanting; and this defect appears to be in that very part which regards the information on the scriptural books. For in all probability that is wanting which Eusebius, in the above-mentioned passage,[10] and Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*[11] have quoted from it. Eusebius says, that Clement in this epistle, had adopted many sentiments of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and even transcribed some passages. The former are found indeed in the epistle, which still exists, but not the latter: unless we suppose that the words of Eusebius are not to be taken in their most literal meaning. But Irenæus, in proof of the antiquity of the then prevailing doctrine, appeals to this epistle of Clement. "In it," these are his words, "he delivers the doctrine which he had very lately received from the apostles; namely, that there is one Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth; who formed man, brought in the deluge, called Abraham, conducted the Jewish people out of Egypt, spake to Moses, gave the law, and sent the prophets; who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels; that this God is declared by the Church to be the Father of Jesus Christ, every one who chooses may see

[4] In the Spicileg. Patrum et hæreticorum Seculi, 1—3, which was published at Oxford, 1698 and 1700, in 2 vols. in 8vo. Vol. i. p. 266—269.

[5] See Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 49.—The same circumstance makes me suspect the genuineness of the two Syriac epistles, which Wetstein has published at the end of his Greek Testament, and defended as genuine. But the silence of antiquity, and the recommendation of celibacy found therein, compel us absolutely to reject them.

[6] It stands in Cotelerius, vol. i. p. 145—181, and in Frey, p. 1—73.

[7] Pp. 107, 108.

[8] P. 134.

[9] Formerly I was of the usual opinion, that this epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. But Lardner has produced arguments, which appear to me incontrovertible, that it must be ascribed to the year 96.—*Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 23—28.

[10] B. iii. ch. 38.

[11] Lib. iii. cap. 3. § 3. p. 176.

himself from this epistle."[12] All this also is wanting in the epistle which has descended to us. Irenæus does not indeed positively assert, (as Mill on Matth. xxv. 41, appears to adopt,) that Clement had taken that doctrine from the apostolical writings; he only says, that he had received it from the apostles. Nevertheless, his information still proves, that as early as the first century the very same system, in respect to the above mentioned points, was adopted by the Christians, which we find in our present Scriptures of the New Testament. Perhaps Clement had been more copious on this subject, which Irenæus has only quoted in the form of extracts. If this be the case, the loss is of still greater moment.

Clement in this epistle appeals by name to an Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, in which he speaks of factions among them; one of which declared Peter, another Apollos, and a third Paul for their head.[13] In order to recommend unity and universal love to the Corinthians, he uses a similitude. "Consider," says he,[14] "our bodies. The head is nothing without the feet, so neither the feet without the head. Even the most inconsiderable members are very necessary and useful to the whole body. They all harmonize with, and are subject to, one another, for the preservation of the whole." Saint Paul uses (1 Cor. xii. 12—26) the very same similitude for the very same purpose.—In the forty-sixth chap. (p. 69,) he exhorts them to unity and love, "because they would otherwise lacerate the members of Christ, and tear them from one another; and would rage against their own bodies, and most senselessly forget, that we are members one of another." Saint Paul also (1 Cor. xii. 27) has employed the same argument.—He makes[15] a representation of charity, which is taken almost entirely from 1 Cor. xiii. "Charity covers a multitude of sins. It undertakes all work, it bears all with patience. In charity there is no meanness, no pride. Charity does all things with unity. Through charity the chosen of God are made perfect."—Thus much, then, is unquestionable from the evidence of Clement, that the First Epistle to the Corinthians was actually written by the Apostle Paul, in the first century.

In the thirty-sixth chapter,[16] Clement makes the very same comparison between Christ and the angels, and uses the very same arguments to prove his divinity, as are found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (chap. i. 3—13.) The whole passage deserves to be submitted to the reader, that he may himself judge of its concordance with the above mentioned part of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Clement had before said of Jesus, That he alone was the High Priest, through whom God would lead us to the enjoyment of immortal wisdom; "who," he continues, "is the brightness of his Majesty, (απαυγασμα της μεγαλωσυνης αυτου,) and by so much greater than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For so it is written, (Psalm civ. 4,) Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But of his Son, thus said the Lord, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the whole earth (τα περατα της γης) for thy possession. And again he saith unto him, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool."—However accurately this passage may harmonize with the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, yet I do not pretend to draw a conclusion from it for the authenticity of that epistle. Clement might have derived all these expressions concerning Christ, and these proofs, from the oral information of an apostle. If the authenticity of the Epistle to the Hebrews be not yet determined, (which in this place must necessarily be the case,) then it is equally possible that the author of this epistle copied from Clement, as that the latter copied from the former.

For the same reasons I must judge in a similar manner of the passages which nearly resemble those in our present Gospels of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke. In the thirteenth chapter[17] he exhorts the Corinthians to forbearance and brotherly kindness in these words,—"Let us especially remember the commands of the Lord Jesus, for thus he said, Be merciful, so shall ye find mercy. Forgive, so shall it be forgiven unto you. As you do, so shall it be done unto you. As you give, so shall it be given unto you. As you judge, so shall you be judged. As you shew kindness, so shall kindness be shewn unto you. With what measure you mete, with the same it shall be measured unto you." Similar commands of Jesus actually exist in Matt. vii.

[12] The Five Books against Heresies, by Irenæus, are extant at present, except a few fragments, preserved by Greek ecclesiastical writers, only in an ancient Latin version. In the passage quoted above, the translator uses the word *Scriptura*—"Ex ipsa *Scriptura*, qui velint, discere possunt."—Probably, therefore, the word in the original was γραφη. But the translator, in the section just preceding, which Eusebius has preserved in the Greek, having rendered the same word by *Epistle*, ought also to have translated it in the same manner here; επιστολιν δ' την Ρωμη εκκλησια γραφην ικανωτατην τοις Κορινθιοις, he translates, "Scripsit, quæ est Romæ, ecclesia, potentissimas *literas* Corinthiis." This remark proves how void of foundation is the accusation which is made by the enemies of Christianity, that Irenæus in this place pronounces the epistle of Clement to be (*Scriptura*) a divine Scripture.

[13] Ch. xlvii. p. 70.—"Look into the Epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle. What has he there written to you in the very beginning, in the beginning of Christianity?" (Thus I render the words, εν αρχη Ευαγγελιου, which phrase is commonly used in this sense by the ecclesiastical writers. This must not therefore be understood of a gospel written by Saint Paul; which is also evident from the context.)—"Through the instigation of the Spirit, he admonishes you concerning himself, and Peter, and Apollos, because that even then you did form parties."

[14] Ch. xxxvii. p. 57.

[15] Ch. xlix. p. 73.

[16] Pages 55, 56.

[17] Page 20.

1, and Luke, vi. 36—38. But Clement does not once affirm in this passage, that he derived them from any written information. He, and also the Corinthians to whom he wrote, might have received them orally from the Apostles. In the same manner he reminds them[18] of another precept of Jesus. "Remember the words of Jesus, who said, Wo to that man; it were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should offend one of my elect. It were better for him that a millstone should be fastened to him, and that he should be drowned in the sea, than he should offend one of my little ones." This agrees almost verbatim with the discourse of Jesus, in Matt. xviii. 6; Mark, ix. 42; Luke xvii. 1, 2. But it does not therefore follow, that the passages were taken from these scriptures. Clement might have known them from oral information; or other lives of Jesus might exist from which he selected them; for Saint Luke in his Gospel, (i. 1,) actually declares, that in his time many such lives of Jesus were read among the Christians. From this cause Lardner[19] also is in doubt, whether he could call these passages testimonies for the historical truth of the books of our New Testament.

Whatever besides is usually quoted from the epistle of Clement for the authenticity of the New Testament, is of infinitely less value. Some of these sentences agree with our New Testament only in common-place maxims, or, indeed, only in a word or two. "Let us come up," says Clement,[20] "to the glorious and venerable rule of our holy calling." This, it is pretended, is a quotation from the passage, 2 Tim. i. 9, "Who hath called us with an holy calling." "Nothing," says he in another place,[21] "is impossible with God, but to lie;" which is pretended to be taken from Heb. vi. 18, where something similar is said of God. We might in this manner prove that Seneca, Plutarch, nay, even Socrates and Plato, had quoted the New Testament. Others, indeed, have a greater resemblance in thought and expression; but they are not therefore of necessity taken from our New Testament. Clement might have learnt them through personal intercourse with the apostles, or have borrowed them from the books of the Old Testament,[22] or from other Christian writings[23] which then existed.

[18] Chap. 46, p. 70.
[19] *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 31—33.
[20] Chap. vii. p. 11.
[21] Chap. xxvii. p. 42.
[22] For instance, in the 30th chap. p. 45, he quotes a passage, yet without naming its author,—"For God," says he, "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." This sentence is found, indeed, in James, iv. 6; but it stands also in Proverbs, iii. 34.
[23] The author of what is called the second epistle, is speaking of the wicked, chap. iv. p. 93, and then adds—"Concerning these the Lord has said, Though ye should be joined unto me, even in my very bosom, and keep not my commandments, I would reject you, and say unto you, Depart from me, I know you not, whence you are, you workers of iniquity." This passage is evidently similar to that in Matt. vii. 23. Nevertheless, it is not taken thence, but from an apocryphal book. In the same manner Clement, when he quotes the discourses or actions of Christ, may have taken them from some other history that was extant when he wrote. For the other historians of the life of Jesus might have been equally credible men, as those whose memoirs are contained in the New Testament, although they did not write, like the latter, from divine inspiration.

Dr Mill, in the Prolegomena to his edition of the New Testament, No. 140, draws the following inference from this epistle of Clement:—That Clement had read our first three Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Romans, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of Saint James, and the First Epistle of Saint Peter. From such conclusions the most convenient opportunities are afforded to unbelievers, of bringing into discredit the whole body of evidence for the truth of Christianity. I dare not attempt to prove from this ancient document more than that our First Epistle to the Corinthians is authentic.

In reading this venerable work of a teacher, who was an intimate friend of the Apostle Paul, who was also well acquainted with the other apostles, and had undoubtedly a perfect knowledge of all their doctrines and writings; who even himself presided, at the time of the apostles, as bishop, over a community to which Saint Paul had written one of his longest epistles, many difficulties have very forcibly occurred to me. I will here point them out; perhaps they may excite others to examine this important document with more accuracy.—First, In this short epistle, which occupies about forty small octavo pages, Clement quotes almost fifty passages from the Old Testament, sometimes word for word, and sometimes by name. It was therefore by no means contrary to the fashion of those days to quote many scriptural passages by way of proof. Why, then, does he appeal to the Scriptures of the New Testament so seldom verbally, and only in a single instance by name? They were all at that time composed, the Revelation of Saint John perhaps excepted. For Clement wrote his epistle after the death of the Apostles Paul and Peter.[24] Secondly, In the xxiv—xxvi. and in the l. chap. p. 39—42, and p. 74, 75, he attempts to prove the resurrection of the dead, and quotes for that purpose many passages from the Old Testament, all of which in fact prove nothing. Whence is it, then, that he quotes not a single one among the great number of far clearer passages in the New Testament, particularly in the First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians? What could be more decisive to the Corinthians, to whom he wrote, than the determination of the apostle, who had wrought so many miracles among them, and of whose divine inspiration they had no doubt?

Having frequently made these difficulties the subject of my consideration, it appears to

[24] Chap. v. p. 9, 10.

me that much may be said to lessen, if not entirely to remove, their force. As to the first, I answer, That Clement very rarely makes his quotations from the Old Testament by name; but almost constantly only according to their contents. Nor was it very customary for the ancient writers to quote by name, as may be seen for instance in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the author quotes generally according to the contents only, or with an indeterminate phrase, "one in a certain place testified," (ch. i. ii.) Moreover, Clement presumed that the contents of the New Testament were already known to the Christians at Corinth. But this he could not presume in respect of the Old Testament, which was generally unknown to the heathen converts. With regard to the second difficulty, it appears to me that the immediate object of Clement was not so much to prove the truth of this doctrine of Christianity, as to shew its harmony with the doctrine of the Old Testament. For this reason he quotes, however ill applied, passages of the Old Testament exclusively, and in such profusion. The doctrine itself he presupposes to be true, and to be believed. The beginning of the 47th chapter, "Receive the epistle of the holy Paul; what has he there written to you?" rendered all farther quotations of particular passages of this epistle unnecessary.

3. *Hermas.*

We have an ancient writing under the title of Pastor,[1] or Shepherd, which bears the name of Hermas, whom Saint Paul (Rom. xvi. 14) enumerates among those to whom he particularly sends salutation. It contains, as we have it at present, three books. In the first, which has the title "Visiones," are four visions. The Church of God appears to him four times, in the form of an old woman, gives him various doctrines, (which are very commonplace, and not always just,) and particularly informs him, that the Christians had much tribulation to expect, but that they might overcome it by patience and prayer. After some time appears a venerable man, in the habit of a shepherd, and dictates to him as he writes, twelve commands, which contain a kind of catechetical instruction in morality, very incomplete, and in part bad and unchristian: These are the contents of the second book, which is therefore called "Mandata." Again, this venerable man dictates to him certain types, comparisons, and narratives, in which are veiled certain moral truths, and the future fortunes of the church. These compose the third book, which on this account is entitled "Similitudines." The work was written originally in Greek; but we have now only an ancient Latin version,[2] except a few fragments preserved in the Greek fathers, and which may be seen in Cotelerius.

If we were to form our judgment of the author from the book itself, we should suppose it to have been written by one who was a Jew by birth, and who lived in the first century. The rigid adherence to fasts, and high idea of their meritoriousness;[3] the figurative and allegorical kind of representation;[4] the quoting of the book Heldam et Modal;[5] and the Hebrew name[6] given to the angel, or, as others explain it, to the frightful beast which appeared to him; these evidently betray a writer, who was educated in the Jewish mode of thinking. And that it was composed in the first century, is probable from the first book. In this the old woman foretells the fortunes of the church, and indeed in a very mysterious manner. But all her prophecies are so general and indeterminate, that nothing more can be learnt from them than that "the Christians were to be greatly persecuted." Now had the author lived later, in the second, or even third century, for instance, he would certainly have made his prophetess to give a more determinate and complete description of those persecutions; of the tyrants who should command them; of the cruelties, and modes of torment and death which should hereafter be made use of; and subjects of the like nature. The author, it may be added, who in the whole composition appears to have been a good, though an ill-informed man, calls himself Hermas, and assures his reader, that he wrote it at Rome,[7] and at the time when Clement was bishop of that church.[8] We perceive, therefore, even without external evidence, that it is extremely probable that this work came from the apostolical Hermas. And this is corroborated by the express testimonies of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, and Jerome, who not only inform us, that the apostolical Hermas did really leave us such a

[1] It stands in Cotelerius, vol. i. pp. 75—126.

[2] Whoever desires to be farther informed respecting the opinions of learned men on these writings of the apostolical period, may consult the first volume of "Le Nourry Apparatus ad Bibliothecam Maximam Patrum et Antiquorum Scriptorum Eccles. Lugduni edit." in which every thing that belongs to the subject is treated with great accuracy and copiousness. The account of the Pastor is to be found, pp. 47—70.

[3] See Similitud. V.

[4] See the Visiones and the Similitudines.

[5] Visio. ii. § 3, p. 77.—"The Lord is nigh to them that turn unto him, as it is written in the book of Heldam and Modal, who prophesied to the people in the wilderness." These are the words of the author himself. The history to which he alludes, is found in Num. xi. 26, 27. But the Hebrew names of these prophets are Eldad and Medad. In the "Synops. Scripturæ S." which is known under the name of Athanasius, there is a book Heldam and Modal mentioned among the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament.

[6] The name in the work itself is Hegrin, הגירין. See Visio. iv. § 2, p. 83, and Not. Oxoniens. in loc.

[7] Visio. i. § 1. p. 75.

[8] For, in Visio. ii. § 4, p. 78, he receives a command to write two copies of this prophecy, and to send one of them to Clement, who would transmit it to the foreign cities.

book, but they also quote from it many and long passages, and these exactly agreeing with our present copies.[9] We cannot, therefore, refuse to attribute this book to the abovementioned writer, without bringing into suspicion the whole of ecclesiastical history.

Eusebius gives us the following information concerning the *Pastor*, which many in his time supposed to have been written by the apostolical Hermas,—"That some believed it to be a very useful book, as an introduction to religion, and that it was therefore read publicly in the churches."[10] This opinion agrees very well with the work which we have at present. Its style is entirely adapted to the senses. The "Similitudines" in which the writer clothes his instruction, are nothing more than a collection of similies, taken from common objects, for instance, from a vine, a green tree, or a flock. This is the case also with the "Mandata" and "Visiones." And thus we in modern times compose books of instruction for children; but, indeed, with this difference, that it is written in a rough and unpolished style. The whole plan of the book is, if I may use the expression, dramatic; as if adapted to children and beginners. The author does not teach, but relates. The first book is the narrative of his conferences with a venerable matron; and the other two contain the relation of his conversation with a shepherd. These conversations are throughout dramatic. A splendid tower is erected by a variety of artists, and composed of stones of every species. Hermas walks into the country; here his instructor points out, now a vine, now a tree just shooting forth its leaves; and, at every prospect, takes occasion to instruct him. The writer of this book is sometimes represented as an enthusiast, who fancied that he saw a variety of visions, and heard revelations. We might with equal justice, on account of the fairy tales in her Magazine for Children, call Beaumont a fanatic.

This form in which Hermas has composed his book, did not certainly afford him any opportunity to quote passages from the Bible, as proofs in his system of instruction. Many similar thoughts and expressions have been produced, of which Lardner[11] has collected a great number. But although this work is nearly as large as all the other writings of the apostolical fathers taken together, yet we cannot discover in it any where a single scriptural book cited expressly, and by name.

4. *Ignatius.*

Ignatius was bishop of Antioch; at the command of the Emperor Trajan, because he could not be prevailed on to renounce Christianity, he was conducted to Rome in the year of Christ 106, in order to fight with wild beasts exhibited at the public games; he remained constant, and was torn to pieces by lions in the amphitheatre. His seven genuine epistles[1] stand in Cotelerius, vol. ii. p. 11—42, and in Frey's edit. immediately after the epistles of Clement, pp. 1—73. These are tolerably well purified[2] from modern interpolations. I say tolerably well, for even the smaller edition appears in certain places to be still suspicious. In all these epistles, only a single book of the New Testament is expressly named by him, which is Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Among the advantages belonging to the Ephesians, which Ignatius notices in his epistle to this community,[3] he distinguishes this in particular, that they had received the knowledge of the mystery of the holy Paul. "You are," says he, "fellow-partners in the mystery of the holy Paul, who in his whole epistle, makes honourable mention of you, as true members of Jesus Christ."[4] Saint Paul names the important doctrine to the publication of which he was peculiarly called, that is, the doctrine of the equal participation of the grace of God through Jesus by the heathens and Jews, the mystery, the heretofore unknown doctrine, *μυστηριον*.[5] On this account Ignatius calls the Ephesians "fellow-partners in the mystery of Paul," (*Παυλου συμμυστας*) and reminds them of the praises which the apostle had frequently bestowed on them in his epistle; that he might thereby excite in them a noble ambition. We have therefore in this passage an express evidence for the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians. For the supposition of the author of the "Letter concerning the persons to whom Saint Paul wrote what is called the Epistle to the Ephesians,"[6] that instead of *μνημονευει* must be read *μνημονευω*, is a conjecture which not only contradicts (as Lardner has observed on the cited passage) all manuscripts, but destroys also the whole connection of the twelfth section.

In the Epistle to the Philadelphians,[7] he

[9] These passages are collected together in Cotelerius, vol. i. pp. 68—72, where they may be seen all at one view.

[10] *Τῷ δ' ἑτέρων ἀναγκαιοτατον, ὁις μαλιστα δει στοιχειωσεις εισαγωγικης, κεκριται ἁθην ηδη και εν εκκλησιαις, ισμεν αυτο διδημοσιευμενον.* — *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. 3. p. 90.

[11] *Credibility*, vol. ii. pp. 52—65.

[1] Besides the original, which is written in the Greek language, there is extant also an ancient Latin version, which is found in Cotelerius, pp. 124—131.

[2] See Jacobi Usserii *Dissertationes de Ignatii Epistolis*, in Cotelerius, vol. ii. p. 199, seq. but particularly, Joannis Pearsonii *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ*, ibid. p. 251, seq. and Joan. Clerici. *Diss. de Ignatii Epistolis*, ibid. p. 501, seq. and Prof. Schroeckh's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. p. 337, of the original.

[3] § xii. p. 49.

[4] *Παυλου συμμυσται του ἁγιασμενου,—ὁς εν παση επιστολη μνημονυει ὑμων εν Χριστω Ιησου.* That *μνεμονευειν* sometimes means "to make honourable mention of one," is well known; should a proof of this be required, I refer the reader to Lardner, *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 70.

[5] Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Eph. iii. 3—9.

[6] See Benson's *History of the First Planting of the Christian Religion.*

[7] § v. pp. 48, 49.

gives them as it were an account of the sources from which he had drawn his faith. "I flee to the Gospel, as to the body of Christ; and to the Apostles, as to the presbytery of the Church. Let us also respect the Prophets; for they likewise published to men, that they should ground their hope on the Gospel, and on Jesus, and expect his coming."[8] Every one will acknowledge that by "the Prophets," Ignatius means the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament. Without doubt, then, he understands by "the Gospel," the writings of the evangelists; and by "the Apostles," the writings of the apostles. Again, when he warns them[9] against a love of disputation, and exhorts them to act in all things according to the doctrine of Christ, he represents to them his own example. "Hearing some persons declare," said he, "I believe nothing but what I find in the ancients, (or, according to another reading, the archives,) namely, in the Gospel, I answered, but it is there written. And thereby I brought them to acknowledge that they would believe."[10] From these passages thus much is clear, that in the time of Ignatius there existed certain writings of the evangelists and apostles, formed into a collection. Their nature and number, however, is uncertain, since he has given us no catalogue of them.

In these epistles are also many sentiments and expressions, which appear to have been borrowed from the Scriptures of our New Testament. In the epistle to the community at Smyrna,[11] Ignatius says of Jesus, "That he was according to the flesh, truly of the family of David, and a Son of God, according to the will and power of God." Saint Paul speaks of him almost in the same manner, (Rom. i. 3, 4.)—To the Ephesians[12] he writes, "The cross of Christ is a stumbling-block unto unbelievers; but to us, salvation and eternal life. Where is now the wise, and the profound inquirer? Where is the boasting of them that are called learned?" Saint Paul makes the same remark on the evangelical doctrine, (1 Cor. i. 18—31.)—Ignatius exhorts the Magnesians in almost the very words of Saint Paul, (1 Cor. v. 7, 8,) "Cast away the evil leaven, which is become old and sour; and be transformed into a new mass, which is Christ."[13] In the Epistle to Polycarp,[14] he recommends that he should exhort the men "to love their wives, even as Christ loves his Church." This excellent command is found in Eph. v. 25.—The many other passages in which the New Testament is said to have been quoted,[15] have either only a very distant similitude,[16] or are evidently different.[17]

Ignatius may therefore be produced as a clear evidence for the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians, and that in his time existed a collection of evangelical and apostolical writings. We may also with probability conclude from his epistle, that the Epistle to the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, were at that period already written.

5. *Polycarp.*

Polycarp was an immediate disciple of Saint John the apostle, by whom he was also appointed to the bishoprick of Smyrna.[1] According to the information of Irenæus,[2] he left behind him various writings. But none of them are come down to us except his Epistle to the Philippians; and even this is no longer entire in the Greek original.[3]

In this work he testifies expressly, that Saint Paul had written an Epistle to the Philippians, in which he strengthened their faith, hope, and love towards God, Christ, and their

[8] Προσφυγων τω ευαγγελιω, ὡς σαρκι Ιησου, και τοις αποστολοις, ὡς πρεσβυτεριω της εκκλησιας. Και τους προφητας δε αγαπωμεν, δια το και αυτους εις το ευαγγελιον κατηγγελκεναι και εις αυτον ελπιζειν, και αυτον αναμενειν. — Commentators have given a variety of opinions to account for Ignatius calling the Gospel σαρξ Ιησου. This appears to me to be the most natural cause, because it promulgates the accomplishment of the promises of the Old Testament. These are generally called the *shadow*, and Christ the substance, or *body*. Or this may be the reason, as Le Clerc has remarked on the passage, that he put as much confidence in the contents of the Gospel, as if Jesus were still alive, and assured him of its truth. The last words are obscure, in the way they are usually rendered. The translation given above appears to me to convey the true sense of the author.

[9] § viii. pp. 51, 52.

[10] I will subjoin this difficult passage, on which the commentators are so much at variance, in order that the reader may, without farther trouble, examine the translation which I have given above. Επει ηκουσα τινων λεγοντων ὁτι εαν μη εν τοις αρχαιοις, (or, according to a different reading, αρχειοις,) ευρω, εν τω ευαγγελιω, ου πιστευω. Και λεγοντος μου αυτοις, ὁτι γεγραπται, απεκριθησαν μοι, ὁτι προκειται. Ignatius, in the preceding sixth section, had exhorted the Philadelphians to beware of those who produced every kind of Jewish tenet, but were absolutely silent concerning Jesus Christ. I translate, therefore, the last words, "ὁτι προκειται — Itaque propositum est," namely, credere; and understand the passage in this manner, that in their disputations they should trust exclusively to the decisions of the Gospel, and endeavour to convince their opponents therefrom with all gentleness. A similar passage is found in Epictetus, in *Arriani Dissertation. Epict.* lib. iv. cap. 5, edit. Joan. Uptoni, tom. i. p. 509. He had taught in the preceding part, "that we should constantly live agreeably to nature," and adds, Τουτο γαρ εστιν, ὁ αει προκειται τω κυλω και αγαθω.

[11] § i. p. 2.

[12] § xviii. p. 32.

[13] § x. p. 42.

[14] § v. p. 16.

[15] See Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. p. 70—85.

[16] As, for example, in Lardner, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 17, 18, 27, 31, 36, 38, 42.

[17] See Lardner, No. 43.

[1] See Irenæus, Lib. iii. cap. 3, § 4. Eusebius, Lib. iii. cap. 36, p. 130, and Hieronymus *De vir. Illustr.* cap. 13.

[2] In Eusebius, Lib. v. cap. 20.

[3] It stands in Cotelerius, vol. ii. pp. 136—139, and the old Latin version, which contains the entire epistle, pp. 190, 191. Both may be seen in the edit. of Frey, pp. 143—161. The testimonies of the above mentioned authors, and the passages cited by them, place the authenticity of this epistle beyond all doubt. If the fragments which are called *Responsiones* (in Coteler. l. cit. pp. 205, 206, and in Frey, p. 162—164) were the genuine production of Polycarp, they might be considered as an evident testimony for the authenticity of the four Gospels.

neighbour. "Paul," says he,[4] "not only preached in person to you the true doctrine, but also when absent wrote epistles to you, by the study of which you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith which has been delivered to you." And in another place,[5] he expresses his astonishment at the covetousness of Valens, one of their presbyters. "But," he adds, "I have never observed, nor ever heard the same of you, among whom Paul preached. On the contrary, he makes mention of you in the beginning of his Epistle, and boasts of you in all communities."[6] He cites also expressly, although not by name, a passage from Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, (vi. 2.) "An nescimus quia sancti mundum judicabunt? sicut Paulus docet."[7]— In like manner he appeals to the command which stands in the Holy Scriptures, "Be ye angry in such a manner that ye do not sin; and let not the sun go down upon your wrath."[8] Confido, vos bene exercitatos esse in Sacris Litteris. — Ut his scripturis dictum est, Irascimini et nolite peccare; et sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram. Now, since the passage, as here quoted, does not exist in any part of the Old Testament, but is found exclusively in the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians, (iv. 26,) this sentence may therefore be considered as an evidence that the Epistle to the Ephesians was already esteemed at that time as a divine Scripture.

This epistle of Polycarp is throughout moral, and contains a variety of ethical maxims, delivered almost in the same words which we find in the Scriptures of our New Testament. —"Remember," says he,[9] "what the Lord taught, Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Farther, "Blessed are the poor, and they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God." Passages of similar import are found in Saint Matthew, v. 3, 7, 10; vii. 1, 2; Saint Luke, vi. 20, 37, 38 — "We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, in order that every one may give an account of himself."[10] This also is found in the same words, Rom. xiv. 10. 12. — He warns them[11] against covetousness with the very same arguments and expressions as are found in 1 Tim. vi. 7, 10; "The love of money is the root of all evil. Let us therefore well consider, that as we brought nothing into the world, so can we carry with us nothing out." In this work of Polycarp we meet besides with many sentiments in exactly the same dress in which they exist in the First Epistle of Saint Peter; which has also been remarked by Eusebius.[12] That I may not be too prolix, I will mention only the passages below.[13] From these passages alone, we cannot indeed conclude, that he has taken them from the under mentioned books of the New Testament;[14] but when joined with the numerous and clear evidences which will be produced in the following pages, they greatly corroborate the proof of the authenticity of the New Testament.

[4] § iii. pp. 146, 147 [5] § ix. p. 150.

[6] See Philip. i. 3—5. In the former of these two passages the plural number stands in the Greek, ὁς—ἐγεννήσεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν. But it is by no means uncommon to use this word in the plural number, although only a single epistle is meant. Comp. Cotelerii not. in loc. Lardner supposes that Polycarp in this place intended not only the Epistle to the Philippians, but also both the Epistles of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians. *Credibility*, vol. ii. pp. 91, 92.

[7] § xi. p. 159. [8] § xii. p. 159. [9] § ii. pp. 145, 146.

[10] § vi. p. 150. [11] § iv. p. 147.

SECT. III. — TESTIMONIES FROM WORKS OF THE FIRST CENTURY, WHICH ARE NOW LOST.

To these evidences of the apostolical fathers, we are enabled to add yet some others from the first century. The writings themselves are, indeed, to the great loss of Christianity, no longer extant; but the following evidences from them have been preserved in part by Eusebius.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, was, according to Eusebius,[1] a man of very moderate understanding, but who employed so much the greater care in examining into the doctrines and history of Jesus and of his apostles, from their immediate acquaintance and disciples. He had collected considerable information, particularly from Aristion, and John the presbyter, (whom some conceived to be the author of the Apoclaypse) which information he delivered to posterity, under the title, λογων κυριακων εξηγησις, "An Explication of the words of the Lord." But of this work nothing now remains, except the extracts which are preserved in Eusebius.

The information, properly belonging to the New Testament, which was contained in that book, is given us by Eusebius,[2] in the following words: — "'Mark, the interpreter of Peter, faithfully wrote what the latter had

[12] Hist. Eccl. lib. xv. cap. 14, p. 162. Πολυκαρπος εν τη δηλωθειση ὑπ' ἐμοῦ φιλιττησιους αυτου γραφη, φερομενη εις ἡμας, κεχρηται τισι μαρτυριοις απο της Πετρου προτερας επιστολης.

[13] Compare § i. p. 144, with 1 Pet. i. 8; § ii. p. 145, with 1 Pet. i. 21; § ii. latter part, with 1 Pet. iii. 9; and § v. p. 149, with 1 Pet. ii. 11.

[14] See above, p. 13.

[1] Hist. Eccles. iii. cap. 39, pp. 135, 138. In this place, Eusebius treats amply of the history and writings of Papias. The decision which he makes in p. 137, σφοδρα —— σμικρος ων τον νουν, ὡς αν εκ των αυτου λογων τεκμηραμενον εστιν φαινεται, must not be considered as a contradiction of the passage in Lib. iii. cap. 36, p. 130; for the opinion which is found there — Παπιας —— αυτος τα παντα ὁτι μαλιστα λογιωτατος και της γραφης ειδημων—is the interpolation of a Scholiast. See Valesius in loc.

[2] Pages 137, 138.

taught. He has not, indeed, placed the discourses and actions of Christ in their proper chronological order; for he was neither a hearer of the Lord himself, nor one of his immediate followers; but, as I have already mentioned, became afterwards acquainted with Peter, who taught according to the wants of his hearers, but without any view of giving a history of our Lord's discourses. Mark, however, committed no mistake in writing some things as they occurred to his memory. For he was anxious to omit nothing which he had heard, and to add nothing false to his account.' — This is Papias' information concerning Saint Mark. And of Saint Matthew he writes, 'Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted it as well as he could.' — The same Papias makes use also of certain evidences from the First Epistle of Saint John, and the First Epistle of Saint Peter. He relates likewise another story of a woman accused before the Lord of many crimes; which history is found in the Gospel according to the Hebrews."[3] This passage deposes an irrefragable evidence for the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint Mark, the First Epistle of Saint Peter, and the First Epistle of Saint John. But if Saint Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, (or, as we call it, Chaldee,) which hence appears to be manifest, yet it is equally certain from other grounds, that he composed it likewise in Greek. The Christians in Palestine used the Hebrew original; added to it many things taken from other gospels, genuine and spurious; and this is that anciently celebrated Gospel of the Hebrews, or as it is likewise named, of the Nazarenes.[4]

In case Papias had advanced in his book still farther evidences of a similar nature, and we have reason to suppose that he did so, Eusebius would have rendered great service to posterity if he had extracted them. But it is much to be lamented that he often excerpts the old writers not so completely as scholars must desire. In the thirty-sixth chapter of the third book of his Eccl. Hist. (p. 133,) in which he continues his account of the Christian teachers in the reign of Trajan, he says, that many of them left their native country, and exercised the office of evangelist, zealously announcing Christ to those who had yet heard nothing of the preaching of faith, and delivering to them the Scripture of the divine Gospels.[5] Eusebius, a man of an integrity universally acknowledged, assures us, that he drew his information from the documents of antiquity which he found in the library at Cæsarea. We are therefore certain, that as early as the beginning of the second century, the four Gospels, which were received in Eusebius's time, that is, the Gospels of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John, were universally known among the Christians; and not only esteemed as genuine writings of the men above mentioned, but also as of divine inspiration.

[3] Μαρκος μεν ἑρμηνευτης Πετρου γενομενος, ὁσα, εμνημονευσεν, ακριβως εγραψεν, ου μεντοι ταξει τα υπο του Χριστου η λεχθεντα, η πραχθεντα· ουτε γαρ ηκουσε του κυριου, ουτε παρηκολουθησεν αυτω· ὑστερον δε ὡς εφην, Πετρῳ, ὁς προς τας χρειας ετοιειτο τας διδασκαλιας, αλλ' ουχ ὡσπερ συνταξιν των Κυριακων ποιουμενος λογων· ὡστε ουδεν ἡμαρτε Μαρκος, ὑτως ενια γραψας ὡς απεμνημονευσεν· ἑνος γαρ ετοιησατο προνοιαν, του μηδεν ὡν ηκουσε παραλιπειν η ψευσασθαι τι εν αυτοις· ταυτα μεν ουν ἱστορηται τω Παπια περι του Μαρκου· περι δε του Ματθαιου ταυτ' ειρηται· Ματθαιος μεν ουν Εβραιδι διαλεκτω τα λογια συνεγραψατο· ἡρμηνευσι δ' αυτα ὡς ἑδυνατο ἑκαστος· κεκηρται δ' αυτος μαρτυριαις απο της Ιωαννου προτερας επιστολης, και της Πετρου ὁμοιως· εκτιθηται δε και αλλην ἱστοριαν περι γυναικος, επι πολλαις ἁμαρτιαις διαβληθεισης επι του κυριου, ἡν το καθ' Εβραιους Ευαγγελιον περιεχει.

[4] See Fabricii *Cod. Apocr. N. T.* I. 355.

[5] Και γαρ δη πλειστοι των τοτε μαθητων, σφοδροτερῳ φιλοσοφιας ερωτι προς τον Θειον λογον την ψυχην πληττομενοι, την Σωτηριον προτερον απεπληρουν παρακελευσιν, ενδιεσι νεμοντες τας ουσιας. ειτα δε αποδημιας στελλομενοι, εργον ειτιτελουν ευαγγελιων, τοις ετι πασιτων ανηκοοις του της πιστεως λογου κηρυττειν τον Χριστον φιλοτιμουμενοι, και την των Θειων ευαγγελιων παραδιδοναι γραφην.

CHAPTER II.

WITNESSES IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

In the second century, the evidences for the Scriptures of the New Testament are far more numerous, determinate, and ample, because we still possess more and larger works of the teachers of this period. I shall not therefore stop to quote the passages themselves, but only name the witnesses, and point out those parts of their writings, where their evidence is to be found. But I will first describe the state of Christianity in the second and third centuries.

SECT. I. — STATE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES.

In the East, (namely, Palestine, Chaldea, and Persia,) where Christianity received its origin, at that time prevailed a mixture of opinions, for the most part false, but which bore the venerable name of philosophy, and had been for a long time embraced by many even at Alexandria, which city, since the Ptolomies, was become the chief seat of learning. This Oriental philosophy (we will admit the honourable appellation for the sake of brevity) was distinguished from the Grecian, principally in three points, namely, in the doctrine of spirits; the maintaining of two original beings; and in morality. In the doctrine of spirits these philosophers had not only regular genealogies of spirits, which they called Æons; but had also invented a parti-

cular science, Theurgy, or a collection of rules, to call up spirits and compel them to satisfy the desires of men. Again, in order to solve that great problem of the understanding—the origin of evil—they adopted two equally eternal and powerful original beings, one good, the other bad. From the bad was derived all matter, consequently the bodies of men, which were therefore the seat of every sin. And from this principle flowed the whole of that gloomy, morose, melancholy system of morals adopted by the philosophers of the East, which placed true virtue in the rejection of all the pleasures of sense, and in the severe treatment, mortification, and torture of the body.[1] These opinions were likewise not uncommon among the Jews, as may be collected from the refutations of them in the New Testament, and from the writings of Josephus. The Pharisees laid a great stress on Theurgy; and through the exercise of this visionary art, they obtained a great part of their consequence among the people. The Essenes, in particular, adopted the whole system.

This Oriental philosophy insinuated itself by degrees also among the followers of the Grecian systems. Of these, none had been so generally received as that of Plato, which was in most parts excellent. But it became gradually much changed and corrupted, not only through ignorance, misunderstanding, and innovation; but also by being intermixed, particularly by Plotinus of Alexandria,[2] a Platonist of the third century, with the Oriental systems. Thus arose the New-Platonic philosophy; a mixture of the Platonic, but very much corrupted, and of the Oriental philosophy: and this became the principal source from which were derived the perversions, mutilations, and most abominable corruptions of genuine Christianity.

For until the second century, the Christians always persisted in the sound exposition of the New Testament. To this period they continued free, if we except the joyless morality of the Essenes, from the distractions of Pseudo-philosophy; and maintained among themselves genuine apostolical Christianity. But scarcely had some of the scholars of the heathen world (for instance Clement of Alexandria) acknowledged Christianity, when the Pseudo-philosophy of the Easterns and New-Platonists, broke in like a rapid torrent, and left behind universal desolation. Until this time the doctrines of the Christian religion had been preached without exception, and with the greatest publicity, to all who would hear them, and, as the founder of Christianity expressed himself in his charge to the apostles, (Matth. x.) "from the house tops." But now, in resemblance of the heathen mysteries, certain ceremonies and doctrines began to be concealed, and thus Christianity assumed its mysteries as well as heathenism. Besides, a variety of heathen ceremonies were adopted in the divine service, and hence Christianity became gradually a ceremonial religion. Since Origen, in the third century, this system of religion, which commands, in a particular manner, the strictest adherence to truth, was perverted so much, that it was declared a duty of charity to forge miracles, and in short, every thing else, if by these means converts might be made to their religion; nay, this was carried to such a pitch of shameless effrontery, that these infamous forgeries were named, pious deceits, *piæ fraudes*. The zealous supporters of the New-Platonic philosophy intermixed their system, even that part of it which is called Platonic love, with Christianity. Socrates and Plato defended the most intimate union of men with beautiful boys, in such a manner, that they made a distinction between corporeal and spiritual love; and asserted, that the wise man feels only the latter in respect to the beauty of the boy, in order to conduct him to virtue. Hence arose, in the third century, that most infamous custom for persons of the opposite sexes, without being united in the bonds of marriage, to live with one another in the closest intimacy; in order, as they pretended, to establish a mere union of souls for the purposes of virtue. But the most injurious effects, and the almost mortal blow which Christianity received from that Pseudo-philosophy of the Easterns, and more especially of the New-Platonists, was the utter neglect, mutilation, and subversion of morals, together with the mystical mode of interpreting the New Testament. The simple and perspicuous system of morality which Christianity taught, was too light for these pretended philosophers; it afforded too little matter for their fancies and speculations. It became, therefore, neglected, and since the third century the whole importance was made to consist in

[1] See, 1. The information contained in Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and Diogenes Laertius Procem. Vitar. Philos. § viii.; 2. The fragments of Zoroaster in Eusebii Præparat. Evangel.; 3. The doctrines of the Brahmins; 4. The refutations in Saint Paul; and, 5. The doctrines of the Gnostics and Manicheans. Compare Moshemii Instit. H. E. majores, sec. i. 136, 339, with Dissert. de causis suppositorum librorum inter Christian. sec. i. et ii. vol. i. dissert. in H. E. p. 223 seq. But the learned and ingenious man, who every where perceived systems, which his philosophical head had created, appears absolutely to err, when he supposes, that in the East existed a peculiar sect, which had brought all those tenets into a regular system. It is more probable that there existed a variety of sects, which occasionally adopted different doctrines.

[2] Plotinus, a disciple of Ammonias Saccas, travelled into Persia, purposely to learn the doctrines of the Indians and Persians. He was the master of the celebrated philosopher and enemy of Christianity, Porphyry, who also edited his works. Mosheim too much indulges his wit here also, as has been remarked and proved by Semler, Walch, and others. Prof. Meiners has treated this subject very amply in his "Considerations on the New-Platonic Philosophy," Leipsig, 1782, 8vo.

the theory of Christianity, or rather of the Oriental Platonic Christianity. But the matter did not rest even here; the religion became burdened with the above mentioned theurgy, and corporeal mortification; and through the assistance of mystical and ridiculous interpretations, every error and every impurity which the passions or caprice of men desired, were introduced into the New Testament. In this manner, that easy, beautiful, immediately and universally active, cheerful, and philanthropic religious system of the New Testament, became during the second, and more particularly the third century, a gloomy, harsh, misanthropic system of whims, fancies, monkery, deceit, and hierarchical tyranny.

To these dreadful calamities from within were added also from without incessant persecutions, which were often general, and sometimes extremely bloody and cruel. Even the worthy Trajan, and yet the more excellent Marcus Antoninus, tortured and put to death many of their most faithful subjects only because they were not idolaters, but chose to live according to the laws of Christianity, which even the heathens themselves acknowledged to be irreproachable and excellent.[3] But the most horrible of all these persecutions began to rage against the Christians about the year 249. The Emperor Decius proceeded so far as to attempt to exterminate Christianity by the roots. By his orders the Christians were not only put to death, but were also afflicted with the most exquisite tortures. A Christian, for instance, had his whole body smeared with honey, and then, his hands tied behind his back, exposed quite naked to the meridian sun, where myriads of insects assailed him, and consumed his body by insensible degrees.[4]

Nevertheless this religion was continually extending itself in all the parts of the then known world. In Gaul there already existed flourishing communities at Lyons and Vienne, in Germany, in Britain, in Africa, and every where the number of Christians so increased, that even in the beginning of the second century the heathens complained that the temples of the gods were quite deserted; and towards the end of the third, the court and army of the heathen emperors were filled with persons of this persuasion. This extensive propagation of Christianity was undoubtedly the consequence of the continually increasing promulgation of the Scriptures of the New Testament. As early as the beginning of the second century were made Latin and Syriac versions. Learned men (particularly Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and his scholar Pierius) were anxious to have accurate transcripts of the original; and opulent men, (especially Pamphilus,) caused, at a great expense, many exact copies of it to be taken and dispersed.[5] We will now hear the individual witnesses themselves.

[3] Let the reader consult, for instance, Plinii Epist. 97, lib. x.

[4] See Schroeckh's *Ecclesiastical Hist.* iv. 190, of the original.

1. *Justin Martyr.*

Justin, surnamed the Martyr, before his conversion to the Christian faith, had carefully studied the Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic systems of philosophy; and must therefore be considered, on account of his learning and antiquity, as a witness of the greatest importance.[1] It is necessary to read only his "Address to the Gentiles," (λογος προς Ελληνας, pp. 1—3), "The Exhortation to the Gentiles," λογος παραινετικος προς Ελληνας, pp. 6—36,) and the work, "On the only God," (περι μοναρχιας, pp. 36—42,) in order to be convinced of his extensive reading in the best writings of antiquity. These works of Justin prove incontestably that the first followers of Christianity were not by any means such as its enemies assert, universally unlearned and simple men. Justin was much better acquainted with the works and opinions of Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras, and with the writings of Orpheus, Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, than most of those who are pleased to assert that the heathen authors are the only sources of all wisdom, but the followers of Jesus universally mean and simple men.

Besides the Revelation of Saint John,[2] Justin has not quoted in any part of his works from a single writer of the New Testament by name. But he appeals often and expressly to the Gospels, which were composed by the apostles and their assistants, as to those books

[5] See Prof. Schroeckh's *Ecclesiastical Hist.* Part i—iv. and C. R. Walch, *On the use of the Holy Scripture among the ancient Christians*—Leipsig, 1779, 8vo.

[1] Concerning the circumstances of his life, principles, and writings, the most accurate and ample information is to be found in the Preface to the Benedictine Edit. of his works, Haag, 1742, fol. Besides the genuine and spurious works of Justin, this edition contains also, Tatian's Oration against the Gentiles, pp. 241—276; Athenagoras's Apology for the Christians, pp. 277—313; and his Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead, pp. 314—336; the three books of Theophilus of Antioch to Autolycus, pp. 337—400; the Satire of Hermas on the Heathen Philosophers, pp. 401—406; and the fragments of the lost writings of Justin, Tatian, and Athenagoras; together with the Acts of the Martyrdom of Justin, p. 585, and fol. His first Apology is a well written defence of the Christians against the calumniations of the Gentiles.

[2] Dialogus cum Tryphone, cap. lxxxi. p. 179. Και ανηρ ημιν ανηρ τις, ω ονομα Ιωαννης, εις των αποστολων του Χριστου, εν Αποκαλυψει γνομμενη αυτω, Χιλια ετη ποιησειν εν Ιερουσαλημ τους των ημετερων Χριστω πιστευσαντας προφητευσε, και μετα ταυτα την καθολικην και —— αιωνιαν δομοθυμαδον αμα παντων αναστασιν γενησεσθαι και κρισιν· "A man from among us, whose name was John, and an Apostle of Christ, has prophesied in his Revelation, that they who believe in our Christ, shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem; and after that, shall follow the universal and eternal resurrection and judgment."

from which the Christians derived their tenets. In his first Apology (presented to the Emperor Antoninus the Pious) he gives this reason for the celebration of the Lord's Supper among the Christians:[3] "For the apostles, in the memoirs which are named Gospels, have thus assured us, that Jesus ordered them to do it; that he took bread, gave thanks, and then said, This do in remembrance of me: this is my body. That in like manner he took the cup, and after he had given thanks, said, This is my blood." And in his advice concerning the behaviour of the Christians at their Sunday meetings, he mentions even, "that the memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are publicly read; and when the reader has ended, the president of the community exhorts them to the imitation of such excellent things."[4] An evident proof, that as early as the beginning of the second century the Gospels were not only generally known among the Christians, but were revered, even as the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that is, as divine books.

The view with which Justin composed his works did not allow him to use the Scriptures of the New Testament by way of proof. We find, nevertheless, where opportunities occur, a variety of passages, and these quoted with the addition that they were to be found in the Christian Scriptures. Thus, in the *First Apology*, in which he speaks of the excellent laws of Jesus, and the virtuous actions of the Christians,[5] of their hope of a future resurrection,[6] and of their customary mode of Baptism and of Supper of the Lord,[7]—and likewise in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, when he treats of the prophecies which Jesus had pronounced,[8] of John the Baptist,[9] of the morality which Jesus taught,[10] of Mary the mother of Jesus,[11] and of the insults offered to the dying Saviour,[12] many passages are quoted from Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John, word for word. And the whole *Dialogue with Trypho* is, in particular, a repetition of the history of the life of Jesus, as it appears at present in our Gospels. In this work Justin compares the circumstances in the life of Jesus with the characters attributed to the Messiah in the Old Testament, and concludes, from their having been exactly fulfilled in him, that he was the Messiah promised by God.

2. *Tatian.*

Tatian, the father of the Encratites, shews himself, in his *Oration against the Gentiles*,[1] to have been a man who, from his travels, had become intimately acquainted with the world; and from reading, familiar with the best writers, and with the history of the Gentiles. In this *Oration* he informs the Gentiles how little reason they had to boast of their philosophers, and of their wisdom; and presses them with very pointed reproofs drawn from their own writings, laws, actions, and manners. In a work of this kind we can easily suppose, that the author had no opportunity of quoting the Scriptures of the New Testament; and we therefore find, in two passages excepted,[2] that they are never once mentioned. But this witness had deposed so much the more in favour of their authenticity in his other writings, which are now lost, except a few fragments preserved by different authors. I shall produce him again, at the conclusion of this century, among the remaining witnesses, whose testimonies are known to us only through the information of others.

3. *Irenæus.*

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, had not only lived very near the times of the apostles, but had enjoyed familiar intercourse with one of their immediate disciples and friends.[1] In his five books against Heresies, he delivers very

[3] Apolog. I. cap. lxvi. p. 83.—See also Dialog. cum Tryphone Judæo, cap. ciii. p. 199. Εν τοις απομνημονευμασι των αποστολων γεγραπται, παρεστιλθαι (namely, σαταναε) αυτω (Christ) και πειραζων μικρι του ειτιν αυτω, προσκυνησον μοι, και αποκριναθαι αυτω τον Χριστον, Υπαγε οπισω μου σαταναε· Κυριον τον Θεον σου προσκυνησεις και αυτω μονω λατρευσεις. And in the same place: Εν τοις απομνημονευμασι α φημι υπο των αποστολων αυτου και των εκεινοις παρακολουθησαντων συντεταχθαι, ὅ τι ἱδρως ὡσει θρομβοι κατεχειτο, αυτου ευχομενου και λεγοντος, ει δυνατον, το ποτηριον τουτο.

[4] Apologia I. cap. lxvii. p. 83. Και τη του ηλιου λεγομενη ἡμερα, παντων κατα πολεις η αγρους μενοντων επι το αυτο συνελευσις γινεται, και τα απομνημονευματα των αποστολων, η τα συγγραμματα των προφητων αναγινωσκεται μεχρις εγχωρει· ειτα παυσαμενου του αναγινωσκοντος, ὁ προεστως δια λογου την νουθεσιαν και προκλησιν της των καλων τουτων, μιμησεως ποιειται.

[5] Apolog. I. cap. xv.—xvii. pp. 52—54.

[6] Apolog. I. cap. xix. p. 55.

[7] Apolog I. cap. lxi.—lxvii. pp. 79—84.

[8] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xxxv. p. 132; cap. lxxvi. p. 137; cap. cvii. p. 201.

[9] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xlix. p. 145; cap. li. p. 147; cap. lxxxviii. p. 186.

[10] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xciii. p. 190.

[11] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. c. p. 196.

[12] Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. ci. p. 196.

[1] See above, p. 23, note [1].—The Preface there noticed gives ample information concerning his life, writings, and opinions.

[2] Cap. xiii. p. 255, and cap. xix. p. 261. In the first passage he asserts, that the soul is και' ἑαυτην σκοτος, και ουδεν εν αυτη φωτεινον; (how this is to be understood is explained by the editor in his Preface, Part. II. cap. xi. § iii. pp. 49—51;) and then adds, και τουτο εστιν αρα το ειρημενον· ἡ σκοτια δε φως ου καταλαμβανει, (John, i. 5.) In the other passage he quotes John, i. 3, with these words, παντα δι' αυτου, και χωρις αυτου γεγονεν ουδε ἑν.

[1] In the above mentioned edition of his works by Massuet, very copious information is given concerning his life, opinions, and writings, in the prefixed *Dissertationes prævi. ad Irenæum*. He left many works, which are named by Eusebius and Jerome; But of these, if we except a few fragments, nothing is now remaining besides his *Libri Quinque Adversus Hæreses*. Even these have not come down to us in the Greek original, but are extant only in an ancient Latin version. The authenticity of this work has been amply proved by C. R. Walch; see Rösler's *Ecclesiastical Fathers*, v. 264—270.

ample and clear testimonies for the historical truth of the Scriptures of the New Testament. He quotes all the evangelists often and by name; relates the cause and design of their writings; and declares that there were only four Gospels, namely, those of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John, which were accounted genuine and divine books.[2] In opposition to the Valentinians, he proves by many passages from the Gospels of Saint Matthew,[3] Saint Mark,[4] Saint Luke,[5] and Saint John,[6] and also from the Acts of the Apostles by Saint Luke,[7] that there is but one God, the Creator and Preserver of all things. To the writings of Saint Paul, he appeals yet more frequently. He proves his tenets against the heretics most commonly from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, those to Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus. He asserts, in many places, that these twelve epistles were the genuine and divine works of Saint Paul;[8] makes numerous and sometimes long extracts from them, evidently proving to every reader, that they are the very same which we at this time possess in the New Testament.[9] In like manner he testifies also the authenticity of the First Epistle of Saint Peter;[10] the First and Second Epistles of Saint John;[11] and the Revelation of the same apostle.[12]

He asserts that these writings were divine, and the sure foundation of the Christian faith.[13] What his opinion of the other books of the New Testament was, we cannot, from his silence, determine. He appears to have considered the Epistle to the Hebrews as neither the work of Saint Paul, nor a divine book.[14] This is a proof, that the first Christians were not so credulous as modern infidels represent them. Had they received all at random, without examination, then certainly they would not have rejected so universally the apocryphal writings, and hesitated to acknowledge the authenticity of some of the books of the New Testament.

In his time collections[15] of the evangelical and apostolical writings were already in the hands of many Christians. They were diligently studied; and in order that those who were not opulent might not be deceived by any corrupted copies, he advised them to apply to the teachers of the church. "All the divine Scriptures," says he,[16] "both Prophecies and Gospels, are open and clear, and may be consulted by all." And in another place,[17] "That man will easily convince himself of this, (namely, that the Old and New Testament came from one and the same God,) who diligently studies the divine Scriptures which are in the possession of the presbyters of the church."

Besides the evangelical and apostolical works above mentioned, Irenæus acknowledges no other to be divine. He appeals indeed often, and with high panegyric, to the writings of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Papias, Hermas, and Justin Martyr, but he never betrays any such veneration for them, as he shews for the writings of the evangelists and apostles.[18]

Here then we have an extraordinarily important evidence for the historical truth of the greatest part of the books of the New Testament: it is the evidence of a man who lived so near the times of the apostles, who had enjoyed an intimate intercourse with one of their immediate disciples, and was therefore as capable of investigating accurately the truth of those writings, as we are of proving the historical truth of a work attributed to Grotius or Selden: it is the evidence of a man who was well read in all the works respecting Christianity, both of the orthodox and heretics; who himself doubted of the truth of some books of the New Testament, and consequently must be considered in this point as totally exempt from credulity. This witness, thus qualified, appeals in the face of heretics to those writings, as to works which descended incontestably from the apostles and evange-

[2] The most particular passages are, Lib. iii. cap. 1, p. 174, and cap. 2, p. 190—192. That he makes use of such strange arguments, from the four winds, &c. by way of proof, is of no consequence to us in the present inquiry. It is sufficient, that he expressly asserts, that in his time no other Gospels, but the four above mentioned, were received among Christians.

[3] L. cit. cap. 9, pp. 184, 185.

[4] L. cit. cap. 10, pp. 185—188.

[5] Ibid.

[6] L. cit. cap. 11, pp. 188—190.

[7] L. cit. cap. 12, pp. 193—198.

[8] For in his quotations he makes use of the following phrases:—"Paul has this in his Epistle to the Romans," lib. 3, cap. 16, p. 205. "Paul shews this in his First—or—Second Epistle to the Corinthians," lib. 3, cap. 7, p. 182; lib. 4, cap. 27, p. 264. He uses these, or similar forms of quotation, for every one of the above mentioned epistles.

[9] Lardner has collected proofs thereof in his *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. pp. 157—169.

[10] He quotes this epistle also, with the same introductory phrase—"Peter says in his epistle."—Lib. iv. cap. 9, p. 238.

[11] See Lib. iii. cap. 16, p. 206, and ibid. p. 207.

[12] See particularly, Lib. v. cap. 26, finem libri, pp. 323—337, where he proves the destruction of the Roman monarchy, the wickedness of antichrist, and the millenniary kingdom about to take place before the universal judgment, from the Revelation of Saint John.

[13] See Lib. iii. cap. 1. p. 174. Lib. ii. cap. 28, p. 156.

[14] See Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. pp. 164—166.

[15] See Lib. i. cap. 3, p. 17, and Lardner, l. cit. pp. 170, 171.

[16] Lib. ii. cap. 27, p. 155.

[17] Lib. iv. cap. 32, p. 270. From the first view it would appear to follow from this passage, that the copies of the sacred books were at that time exclusively in the hands of the teachers. In fact, it asserts only thus much, that they possessed the copies most to be depended on; for the passage referred to in the note immediately preceding, together with many other reasons, will not permit us to doubt, that the generality of Christians also possessed them in abundance. See Walch *On the Use of the Holy Scriptures.*

[18] See Lardner, *Credibility*, vol. ii. pp. 173—178, who has examined with much solidity the passages in which these writings are quoted.

lists. We should, undoubtedly, without hesitation, pronounce every other book, resting only on a single evidence of such weight, to be genuine. Why then should not the testimony of this witness have its full force on the Scriptures of the New Testament?

4. *Athenagoras.*

Athenagoras, a philosopher and a native of Athens, is the most polished and elegant author of Christian antiquity; and in respect of style, excels even Origen. His two works, the *Apology or Petition for the Christians*, (πρεσβεια περι Χριστιανων,) and *A Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead*, (περι αναστασεως των νεκρων,) are written in very pure Greek, and with much wit and eloquence. In the Apology, which he presented to the Emperor Marcus Antoninus,[1] he defended the Christians from the three crimes with which they were falsely accused, namely, atheism, incest, and anthropophagy. He shews, that it is evidently absurd to accuse of atheism, those who restore to the Divinity the honours and adoration of which he had been robbed by idols; or of incest, those who assert that even to look on a woman to lust after her is fornication; or of anthropophagy, those who never frequent the gladiatorial shows, who declare that the use of medicines tending to procure abortion is homicide, and that the exposing of children is infanticide. The whole book cannot be read but with pleasure. Every part clearly evinces that the author had accurately studied the best works of the Grecians, and was master of the style and courtly language proper in addresses to the great. He composed the treatise *On the Resurrection of the Dead*, with a view to defend the truth of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body, against the heathen philosophers. He proves, that such a resurrection is by no means impossible, and so little improbable, that even the mere consideration of the nature of man, and of the justice of God, must lead us to acknowledge it.

This view which Athenagoras had proposed to himself in his writings, did not allow him to cite passages from the Sacred Scriptures. On this account we discover in them (if we except a few passages in which he expresses his propositions in the same words as we find in the books of the New Testament[2]) only one single clear testimony, and this indeed for the authenticity of the First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians. Since the passage is too long, I will only extract the parts which my present purpose requires. In the treatise *On the Resurrection of the Dead*,[3] he avails himself of the proof taken from the fortunes of men, in general, and particularly of the virtuous, in this life. "The justice of God," he infers, "rendering it necessary to reward men as men, that is, as beings which consist not only of a soul, but also of a body, accurately according to their actions; and this reward rarely occurring in the present life;" it is therefore manifest that, according to the assertion of the apostle, "this corruptible and earthly must put on incorruption,—that every one may receive justly according to what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad."[4] And, in chap. xix. p. 332, he had evidently the passage of Saint Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 32, in his mind: "If no future judgment be held on the actions of men, men are nothing better than beasts. Nay they are more miserable than other animals who struggle with their passions and strive after righteousness, and the fear of God, or other virtues. If there be no judgment, then the wild, bestial life is the best; then virtue is folly, and the fear of punishment ridiculous; then the enjoyment of every pleasure is the highest good, and that principle, so pleasant to the votaries of luxury and lust, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die, the first rule of life." Since he here appeals expressly to an apostle, who had promulgated the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, yet without mentioning either his name or his writings; and adopts in his proof the same sentiments which we still find in the writings of that apostle; we shall not certainly presume too far, if we thence conclude, that at the time of Athenagoras, the two Epistles of Saint Paul to the Corinthians were generally known among the Christians, and considered as the source of their faith.

5. *Theophilus of Antioch.*

Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch,[1] considering the object which he had in view, could only mention the Sacred Scriptures occasionally. In his "Three Books to Autolycus," he disputes with a heathen, whom he wished to prepare for a nearer examination of the Christian religion, by first refuting the accusations which had been thrown out, that the tenets of the Christians were absurd, and their conduct detestable for incest and anthropophagy. Notwithstanding this, we find the Gospels of

[1] This is proved, in opposition to Bayle, in the Preface to the above mentioned (p. 23, note [1]) edition of the works of Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch, p. cxiii.

[2] They are collected by Lardner, *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. pp. 132—186.

[3] Cap. xviii. — finem libri, pp. 330—336.

[4] Ευδηλον, ——— ὁτι δει κατα τον αποστολον, το φθαρτον τουτο και διακεισθαι αφθαρσιαν, ινα ——— εκαστος κομισηται δικαιως, ἁ δια του σωματος επραξεν, ειτε αγαθα, ειτε κακα. Cap. xviii, p. 331. The similitude of this passage to Saint Paul's assertions, 1 Cor. xv. 53, 2 Cor. v. 10, is very remarkable; δει γαρ το φθαρτον τουτο ενδυσασθαι αφθαρσιαν, — ινα κομισηται εκαστος τα δια του σωματος, ωρος ἁ επραξεν, ειτε αγαθον, ειτε κακον.

[1] For an account of this writer, see the Preface to the above mentioned Edition, p. cxx.

Saint Matthew and Saint John, the Epistle to the Romans, and the First to Timothy, quoted under the title of Divine Scriptures. In the third book, chap. xiii. p. 388, are recited various precepts of the Old Testament, which inculcate chastity and other virtues; he then adds,[2] "But the evangelical voice teaches chastity in yet greater perfection, when it says, 'Whosoever looketh on another man's wife to lust after her, has already committed adultery in his heart.' And it says farther, 'Whosoever marries one that is divorced, committeth adultery; and whosoever putteth away his wife, except on account of inchastity, committeth adultery,'" (Matth. v. 28, 32.) In the same book, chap. xiv. p. 389, "But the Gospel says,[3] 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you. For if you only love them that love you, what merit have you? Even robbers also, and tax-gatherers do this.'" In the second book, chap. xxii. p. 365, he quotes the passage in 1 John, i. 1, 3, with the following introduction: — "This is taught us by the Holy Scriptures, and by all those conducted by the Spirit, among whom John says,"[4] &c. With the title of the "Divine Doctrines," he quotes passages from Rom. xiii. 7, 8; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.[5] And in the third book, chap. xii. p. 388, he says, "the commands of the prophets and evangelical writers are throughout concordant, because they have all spoken as inspired by the very same Spirit of God."[6]

We may apply to this author our previous observations on Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Athenagoras. Frequent quotations from the writings of Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Euripides, Aratus, &c. discovered that Theophilus was likewise a man of learning and cultivated talents.

6. *Clement of Alexandria.*

Clement, who was a teacher and presbyter at Alexandria, deserves even on this account the esteem of posterity; under his instruction was formed Origen, the most learned of all the fathers of the church. In his writings which are yet preserved,[1] he quotes all the books of the New Testament (except the Second Epistle of Saint Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of Saint John, the Epistle of Saint James, and the Epistle to Philemon,) so often by name, and so amply, that were I to extract all the citations, they would fill a volume.[2] To obtain a fundamental knowledge of the Christian religion, this author had travelled into Greece, Italy, Egypt, and Asia;[3] he was well acquainted with the writings of the earlier Christian teachers, Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, &c.;[4] he had examined the apocryphal books which then existed among the Christians, and compared them with the genuine works of the sacred writers.[5] All these circumstances evince that he did not give his assent to the Holy Scriptures until he had accurately examined them; and therefore afford considerable weight to his evidence for their authenticity.

7. *Tertullian.*

Tertullian, a presbyter at Carthage, is the most ancient of all the Latin Fathers whose works are now extant. His melancholy turn of mind, and the evil customs which began to prevail among Christians, induced him to embrace the fanatical doctrines of the Montanists. But his Montanism can by no means weaken his evidence for the historical truth of the New Testament; unless we conceive that a fanatic must necessarily lose all his organs of sense. Generally speaking, his tenets have no farther influence on his writings, than to occasion his preaching a too severe system of morality; and to shew that he revered Montanus and his prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla as inspired persons, through whom the Spirit of God had spoken. We have a great variety of his writings, which display much sacred and profane learning. But his style is extremely tedious, obscure, replete with Latin words of his own formation, entirely inharmonious, and not rarely bombastic. Cave

[2] Ἡ δὲ εὐαγγελικὸς φωνὴ ἐπιτατικωτέρον διδάσκει περὶ ἁγνείας λεγουσα.

[3] Το δὲ Ευαγγελιον λεγει.

[4] Ὅθεν διδασκουσιν ἡμας αἱ ἁγιαι γραφαι και παντες πνευματοφοροι, ἐξ ὧν Ιωαννης λεγει.

[5] Lib. iii. cap. xiv. p. 389. Ετι —— κ λευει ἡμ ς ὁ Θειος λογος.

[6] Διοτο τους παντας πνευματοφορους ἑνι πνευματι Θεου λελαλησθαι.

[1] Namely, in the *Cohortatio ad gentes*, pp. 1—95; in the *Pædagogus*, pp. 96—314; in the eight books named *Stromata*, (that is, *Various Discourses*,) p. 934: and in the dissertation *Quis dives salvetur?* pp. 935—961, of the Edition of Bishop Potter, Oxford, 715, fol. See Le Nourry *Adparatus ad Bibliothecam maximam patrum*, tom. i. p. 624, seq. where the reader will meet with the most ample information concerning the writings of the Alexandrian Clement. Even in these works we find very evident proofs of the great injury which Christianity has suffered from its connection with the New-Platonic philosophy. See above, p. 22.

[2] Lardner has collected some examples on every book; *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. pp. 210—330.

[3] In the *Stromata*, Lib. i. p. 322, he says, that his book was a short sketch of the discourses which he held with considerable persons in the above mentioned countries.

[4] He cites them often, and with great esteem; but he never pronounces them to be Divine Scriptures, as has been shewn by Lardner, l. cit. pp. 231—234.

[5] He frequently quotes passages from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel according to the Egyptians, the Preaching of Peter, the Revelation of Peter, the Traditions of Matthias; but he distinguishes them clearly enough from the genuine writings of the evangelists and apostles. See Lardner, l. cit. pp. 234—242. And even if we should grant that he considered the writings of Barnabas, Hermas, and Clement of Rome, and the Sibylline verses to be divine, yet this would not tend to invalidate the proof for the divinity of the Scriptures of the New Testament; for we use the testimonies of the ecclesiastical fathers, not in order to prove that these Scriptures are of divine original, but that they are genuine writings of the evangelists and apostles.

asserts, in opposition to Lactantius,[1] that "it is lofty and masculine, and carries a kind of majestic eloquence along with it, that gives a pleasant relish to the judicious and inquisitive reader." But the decisions of this author on style and eloquence are as injudicious, as his historical information is unquestionable. That Tertullian was a man of talents, and well read in the classic works of antiquity, is undoubted.[2] But he had read, like many grammarians and modern editors, with the aid of the memory alone, but without taste or understanding. Lactantius is of the same opinion, "Tertullianus fuit omni genere literarum peritus, sed in eloquendo parum facilis et minus comptus, et multum obscurus fuit."

His works are filled with quotations by name, and long extracts from the writings of the New Testament. In the Apology for the Christians, which he delivered to the heathen magistracy at Carthage, he appeals, among other things, to the strict obedience and reverence of the Christians towards the Roman Emperors. "How can you suppose," says he,[3] "that we have no regard for the welfare of the Emperors? Behold only the word of God, our Scriptures, which we by no means keep secret, but which are even in the hands of our enemies. These command us,—to pray even for our enemies. The following precept also is found there expressly, Pray for kings, princes, and powers, that all things may proceed peaceably with you." Against Praxeas he quotes his proofs principally, as he expresses himself, from the New Testament, from the Gospels, and Apostles. "If I should not settle this dispute from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, I will take my proofs from the New Testament. For I perceive, both in the Gospels and the Apostles, that God is as well visible as invisible."[4] He mentions a Latin translation of those writings, but which did not always accurately express the meaning of the original text.[5] He treats copiously of the four Gospels, of Saint Matthew, of Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John, in a work against Marcion;[6] and proves their authenticity from numerous and credible evidences since the times of the apostles. He quotes, by name, every single book (the Epistle of Saint James, the Second Epistle of Saint Peter, and the Second and Third Epistles of Saint John, alone excepted) with the title of Divine Scriptures, and so often, that to prove it in this place by extracts from his works,[7] would be perfectly superfluous. I will mention only a single passage more, which will serve to shew how cautiously men acted at that time in examining the genuine apostolical writings. In his work against Heresies, "De præscriptione hæreticorum,"[8] he speaks with great confidence of the authenticity of the apostolical writings which were adopted as such by orthodox Christians. He appeals to the evidence of communities which the apostles had personally established, at Corinth, at Philippi, at Thessalonica, at Ephesus, and at Rome; whose members, on account of their intimate intercourse with the apostles, could assert with the greatest degree of certainty what writings actually emanated from them. "Age jam, qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ, percurre ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ apostolorum suis locis præsident; apud quas ipsæ authenticæ literæ eorum (their genuine works) recitantur.—Proxima est tibi Achaia? habes Corinthum. Si non longe es a Macedonia; habes Philippos, habes Thessalonicenses. Si potes in Asiam tendere: habes Ephesum. Si autem Italiæ adjaces; habes Romam; unde nobis quoque auctoritas præsto est."

SECT. III. — EVIDENCES FROM WORKS OF THE SECOND CENTURY, WHICH ARE NOW LOST.

The enemies of our religion complain often and loudly of the loss of those writings against Christianity which were composed by its ancient opponents; and some of them accuse the Christians, in language by no means doubtful, of having been the cause of the destruction of these works. But they do not take into consideration, that of the writings also of the ancient friends and defenders of Christianity many more have been lost than have been preserved. And that, together with these writings, many important evidences for the authenticity of the New Testament have also perished. We have already[1] regretted this loss when we treated above of the history of the first century. In the second this deficiency is still greater and more to be lamented.

1. Concerning Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, Eusebius gives us the following information:[2] —He wrote seven epistles to different Christian communities, and another to a Christian

[1] *Histor. Literar. Scriptor. Ecclesiasticator.*

[2] I quote here the edition of his works by Nicolaus Rigaltius, Paris, 1641, fol.

[3] *Apologeticus*, p. 30.

[4] *Adversus Praxeam*, p. 646. De Novo Testamento sumam confirmationem. In Evangeliis et in Apostolis visibilem et invisibilem Deum deprehendo.

[5] *De Monogamia*, p. 684.

[6] *Adversus Marcionem*, lib. iv. pp. 502, 503.

[7] The reader will find examples in Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. pp. 256—277. Or the truth of the assertion may be seen still more clearly from the list of scriptural passages quoted by Tertullian, which is contained in the above mentioned edition, pp. 766—795. And we cannot discover the least trace, that he had received any other book as divine, or as a genuine writing of the evangelists and apostles. See Lardner, pp. 284, 285.

[8] Cap. 36, p. 245. Lardner has very well cleared up this obscure passage. *Credibility*, vol. ii. pp. 266—269.

[1] Book ii. chap. 1.

[2] Eusebii. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. 23, pp. 184—187, edit. Reading.

matron: in the epistle to the community at Athens he exhorted men to believe and to act according to the Gospel: in the epistle to the Nicomedians he defended the true canon (or, as others translate it, the rule of truth, τῳ της αληθειας παραισται κανονι,) in opposition to the heresy of Marcion: in the epistle to the church at Amastris he had inserted expositions of the Divine Scriptures. All these epistles are now lost; and with them much important information, and many weighty evidences for the authenticity of the New Testament.

2. In the work of Tatian, which still remains,[3] we find (on account of the particular purpose for which it was composed,) few allusions to the apostolical writings. But of these he had treated so much the more amply in his Harmony, or Δια Τεσσαρων, a gospel composed from the four Gospels taken together. This work was well known to Eusebius;[4] and although the author might have inserted his heretical principles even here, yet the loss of this work is greatly to be lamented, as well for many other causes as on account of its great antiquity.[5] Irenæus,[6] and Clement of Alexandria,[7] allude to other writings of this author, in which he attempted to prove some of his heterodox tenets by quotations from the First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

3. Hegesippus, a convert from Judaism, composed five books of ecclesiastical history, in which he gave an account of the apostolical preaching."[8] But of this work we have nothing remaining except a few fragments preserved by Eusebius and Photius. Although the historian might not have entirely laid aside that credulity and inclination for the fabulous, which was peculiar to the Jews of his time, (and that this was the case is plain from the extracts in the above mentioned authors,) nevertheless, the loss of his work is much to be lamented; because there undoubtedly existed in it much material information for a history of the scriptural writings, which he must have collected in his intercourse with many considerable teachers of Christianity. However, we discover from the fragments, that he was very well acquainted with the Scriptures of the New Testament; for he quotes them often, although not by name; and his manner of writing is invariably in that peculiarity of style belonging to these books.[9]

4. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, has rendered himself remarkable in ecclesiastical history, particularly by his examination of the sacred books of the Old Testament.[10] He composed various writings, of which we scarcely know more than the titles, as they are given to us in Eusebius.[11] His books, "On the Conduct of Christians,"—"Of the Prophets,"—"Of the Church,"—"On the Lord's Day,"—"Of Obedience to the Gospel—περι ὑπακοης πιστεως,"—"On the Conception and Birth of Christ—περι κλισεως και γενεσεως Χριστου,"—"On the Revelation of Saint John,"—and "On the Incarnation of God—περι ἐνσωματου Θεου," contained probably more particular information concerning the apostolical writings. From the few fragments of his works we can produce him only as an evidence for the high antiquity of the Revelation of Saint John; yet even this is of dubious import, as we have no information concerning the contents of his treatise on this subject."[12]

5. Of the terrible persecutions which the Christians in Gaul suffered in the time of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, we find a very affecting relation in the epistle which the communities at Vienne and Lyons, in France, sent on this account to the Christians in Asia. Eusebius has preserved a great part of it in his "Ecclesiastical History."[13] The sufferings of the Christians, the patience, cheerfulness, and steadfast behaviour of the martyrs, are described by sentiments and expressions which are taken from the Scriptures of the New Testament.—"Then was the saying of the Lord fulfilled, 'The time will come when whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service,'" (John, xvi. 2.) "They (namely, the martyrs) prayed for their executioners, as did the holy Stephen, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,'" (Acts, vii. 50.) "They endeavoured to follow the example of Christ, 'Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God,'" (Phil. ii. 6.) "He (a martyr of the name of Vettius Epagathus) was a true disciple of Christ, 'following the Lamb whithersoever it goes,'" (Rev. xiv. 4.) When we reflect that this epistle was written by a community in which Irenæus, (who has desposed such ample evidence for the Scriptures of the New Testament, p. 24,) was at that time a Presbyter, we may without hesitation use these passages

[3] See above, p. 24.
[4] *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. 29, pp. 193, 194.
[5] See Valesius in Eusebium, l. cit.
[6] Lib. iii. cap. 23, § 8, p. 222, ed. Massueti.
[7] *Stromat*, lib. iii. p. 547, Potteri.
[8] Eusebius *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. 8, p. 150.
[9] See Lardner's *Credibility.*

[10] He travelled into Palestine, on purpose to obtain information on the true canon of the Old Testament. Eusebius has preserved his catalogue, *Hist. Ecc.* lib. iv. cap. 26, pp. 190, 191.
[11] *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. 26, pp. 188, 189.
[12] The epistle of Melito to a person of the name of Onesimus, who was the cause of his journey into Palestine, begins thus, (Eusebius l. cit. p. 191.) "As you have often, from your love towards the divine doctrine, required of me that I should collect from the Law and the Prophets those passages which concern the Redeemer and our common faith; and as you were desirous of knowing accurately the Old Scriptures, their number, and the order in which they were composed, I have therefore inquired after the books of the Old Testament," &c. This passage appears to prove, that at that time existed also a second collection of sacred books, under the name of the New Testament. See Lardner, l. cit. p. 148.
[13] Lib. v. cap. 1, 2, 3, 4, p. 198, seq.

as proofs of the antiquity of the Gospel of Saint John, of the Acts of the Apostles by Saint Luke, of the Epistle to the Romans and Philippians, and of the Revelation of Saint John; although these books are not quoted by name.

6. Miltiades, one of the apologists for Christianity, was, according to the information of Eusebius,[14] well skilled in the Divine Scriptures and Christian theology. He had given convincing proofs of his erudition in a book which he wrote against the Montanists with this title, περι του μη δειν προφητην εν εκστασει λαλειν, "That it does not become prophets to speak in ecstasy;" and in his works against the Jews and Gentiles,[15] — "He has also left us," says Eusebius, "as well in his writings against the Gentiles, as in those against the Jews, monuments of his zeal for the divine books." Without doubt, therefore, he had copiously used the authorities of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

7. I have produced Theophilus of Antioch above (p. 26) as an evidence for the authenticity of the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint John, of the Epistle to the Romans, and also of the First Epistle to Timothy. Did the work which he wrote against Hermogenes, προς την αιρεσιν Ερμογενους, still exist, we might likewise prove from him the antiquity of the Revelation of Saint John.[16]

8. Pantænus, whom Eusebius,[17] apparently by mistake, mentions as president of the catechetical school at Alexandria, was, as this author infoms us, such a faithful and learned supporter of Christianity, that he would have instructed posterity as usefully by his writings, as he did his contemporaries by his sermons. He preached the Gospel in India,[18] and is said to have found there the Gospel of Saint Matthew in the Hebrew language.[19] Whether this information, which Eusebius gives in a doubtful manner, be true or not, nevertheless it proves thus much, that the Gospel of Saint Matthew was already known in the earliest ages. According to Jerome's relation,[20] he composed also certain commentaries on the Bible.

9. The work of Clement of Alexandria, in which he principally considered the Holy Scriptures of the Christians, his *Hypotuposes*, is also lost, except a few fragments. It contained explications of many books both of the Old and New Testament, especially of the Epistles of Saint Paul, and of the Catholic Epistles.[21] Eusebius has preserved the following information from it,[22] — That the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Saint Paul in the Hebrew language, and translated into Greek by Saint Luke his companion; that the Gospels which contain the Genealogies (namely, of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke) were composed before the others; that Saint Mark wrote his Gospel at the request of Saint Peter's disciples at Rome, and that Saint Peter was so far from rejecting it, that, at the instigation of the Holy Ghost, he imparted a divine consequence to it;[23] and that Saint John had written πνευματικον ευαγγελιον, a Gospel which treated especially of the divine nature of Christ, the others being principally employed on his human. Τον ... Ιωαννην εσκοπον συνιδοντα, οτι τα σωματικα εν τοις ευαγγελιοις δεδηλωται, προδραπεντα υπο των γνωριμων πνευματι Θεοφορηθεντα πνευματικον ποιησαι ευαγγελιον.

Eusebius and Jerome would have performed still greater service to posterity, had they made longer and more complete extracts from those writings of considerable teachers which existed in their times. Both of them notice various teachers of the second century who had written commentaries on the scriptural books. But as they are silent on their con-

[14] *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. 17, pp. 232, 233.

[15] See Eusebius, l. cit. In the first work he had undoubtedly made mention of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Compare the remark of Valesius in loc. cit.

[16] See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. 24, p. 287, who says, that Theophilus, in the above mentioned book, had taken some of his proofs from the Revelation of Saint John, εν ῳ τε τοις αποκαλυψεως Ιωαννου κεχρηται μαρτυριαις.

[17] *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. 10, pp. 222, 223. See Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 203.

[18] The old ecclesiastical historians mean frequently by this name Arabia Felix; see Michaelis *Intr. to the N. T.* vol. iii. p. 124, of the learned Mr Marsh's trans.; but here it is India properly so called, India on the Ganges. Christianity was preached there in the first century by the Apostle Saint Thomas. This is asserted, 1. By the ancient writers consulted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 1, v. 10—2. By the most learned historians of the East, Asseman Bibl. Orient. tom. iii. par. i. p. 611, and par. ii. p. 25—and, 3. By those Christian sects which have existed from the most early antiquity in India, particularly on the coasts of Malabar, who have an ancient tradition to the same purpose, and therefore call themselves Saint Thomas's Christians.—La Croze, 38.

[19] Eusebius, l. cit. ενθα λογος ειχεν αυτον —— το κατα Ματθαιον ευαγγελιον, κ. τ. λ.

[20] Hujus multi ——in sanctam scripturam extant Commentarii. *De vir. Illustr.* cap. 36.

[21] Eusebius, *Hist Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. 14, p. 273, et Photius, *Biblioth. Codice* cix. p. 287, edit. Andr. Schotti. Rothomagi, 1653, folio.

[22] Loc. cit.

[23] Loc. cit. Comp. lib. ii. cap. 15, p. 64. Γινοντα δε το πραχθεν (namely, that Saint Mark had composed in writing the speeches of Saint Peter at the request of the Romans) φασι τον Αποστολον (Saint Peter) αποκαλυψαντος αυτω του Πνευματος ηδεσθηναι τη των ανδρων προθυμια, κυρωσαι τε την γραφην (the Gospel of Saint Mark) εις εντευξιν ταις εκκλησιαις. The sentence αποκαλυψαντος αυτω του Πνευματος has been always referred by translators to the preceding words; but if it be construed with those which follow, every difficulty will vanish, — "Peter, having discovered what had been done, and being instigated by the Holy Ghost, granted the desire of those men, (the Romans,) and gave his sanction to the Gospel of Saint Mark, that it should be read in the Christian communities." Lardner torments himself with the difficulty of this passage, *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 215; but amidst all his observations, he has not reflected that the structure of the words in Eusebius does not by any means necessitate the connection of αποκαλυψ. κ. τ. λ. with γνοντα —— Αποστολον: as if the Holy Ghost had revealed to Saint Peter, that the Romans had petitioned Saint Mark to compose his Gospel, and that he had granted their request.

tents, we can neither determine what information these writers gave, nor on what books of the Bible they had employed their labours.[24]

CHAP. III.

WITNESSES IN THE THIRD CENTURY.

SECT. I. EVIDENCES OF WITNESSES IN THE THIRD CENTURY.

Before I introduce the complete catalogues, which Origen and Eusebius have left us, of those writings which the Christians of the first century held as genuine works of the evangelists and apostles, and venerated as divine books, I will cursorily mention some other witnesses who lived in the beginning of the third century, but whose writings have not descended to us.

1. *Caius Romanus.*

Caius, who was a presbyter of the church of Rome, and a most learned man, quotes in his dialogue with Proculus, a follower of Montanus, all the epistles which we have at present under the name of Saint Paul, as genuine works of this apostle, except the Epistle to the Hebrews, which he has omitted to enumerate among the rest. We find this information in an extract which Eusebius has preserved from this work which no longer exists.[1]

[24] We can make no use of the spurious writings of this century for our present purpose.—1. The Acts of Paul and of Thecla attribute indeed many of the same sentiments to the Apostle Saint Paul, as exist in the books of our New Testament; but it is uncertain whether this be the same work which is mentioned by the Ecclesiastical Fathers. (Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 310.) — 2. The Sibylline Oracles were forged in all probability about the second century. They also relate (in prophecy, as they pretend) almost every single event of the evangelical history; but they do not mention, either expressly or by name, any of the writings of the New Testament. Lardner, l. cit. p. 313, seq. — 3. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs speak often in the language of the New Testament; but it is most uncertain whether this writing be of that early antiquity which many scholars imagine. Origen quotes a work under this title; but how can it be proved that the work which we still possess is the very same? Lardner, l. cit. p. 324, seq. — 4. The Recognitions of Clement, (see Cotelerii *Patres Apostol.* vol. i. p. 483, seq.) which contain Disputations of the Apostle Saint Peter with Simon Magus, and mention other discourses, and a variety of miracles by the same apostle.—5. The Clementine Homilies, which are almost of the very same tenor, and in all probability are the ground-work from which, after many additions and improvements, arose the work mentioned above, in No. 4. (Cotelerius, l. cit. p. 603, seq.)—And, 6. The Clementine Epitome, a compilation out of the Recognitions and Homilies, (Cotelerius, l. cit. p. 755, seq.) These three works, to which the venerable name of Clement has been forged, contain merely similar expressions and sentiments, but not a single quotation, either expressly or by name, from the books of our New Testament. Extracts from the above mentioned writings may be seen in Lardner, l. cit. p. 342, seq.

[1] *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. 20. p. 265.

2. *Hippolytus Portuensis.*

From the fragments which we still possess of the works[1] of Hippolytus Portuensis, we are led to belive that he was a learned man; and the conciseness, solidity, and force with which he wrote, clearly prove that he far excelled all the writers of his time. In support of this I shall quote a single passage,[2] which, if not an adequate testimony for the authenticity of our four Gospels, will at least demonstrate the truth of the history related in them. Hippolytus is proving that Jesus was both perfect man, and perfect God. "His humanity," says he, "may be easily perceived, by the circumstances of his feeling hunger, and fatigue, and thirst; by his fearfully fleeing, and anxiously praying; by his sleeping on a pillow; his imploring for the removal of the cup of sorrow; his sweating from fear of death, and his being strengthened by an angel; by his being betrayed by Judas, mocked by Caiaphas and Herod, scourged by Pilate, insulted by the soldiers, and crucified by the Jews; his commending with a loud voice his spirit to the Father; his bending his head and giving up the ghost; having his side pierced by a spear, being laid, wrapped up in fine linen, in the grave, and raised up on the third day by the Father. His divinity may be easily discovered, since he was worshipped by angels, visited by shepherds, expected by Simeon; he received the testimony of Anna, was visited by the Magi, and announced by a star; he changed water into wine at the marriage feast, calmed the stormy sea, walked upon the water, gave sight to one born blind, raised Lazarus to life, who had been dead four days, and performed many other miracles, forgiving sins, and imparting miraculous powers to his apostles." As early as the time of Eusebius this writer was so little known, that men were even ignorant of what place he was bishop.[3] And scholars of the present day, after having examined all the documents of antiquity, remain still uncertain whether we possess any writings which can be safely attributed to him.[4] We do not even know whether he lived in Italy or in Arabia; whether he was a divine or a statesman.[5]

[1] Joh. Albert Fabricius has collected these fragments, and published them together with the other works attributed to him, at Hamburg, 1716, 2 vols. folio.

[2] It has been preserved by Theodoret. See Fabricii Hippolyt. vol. i. p. 268.

[3] Ἱππολυτος, ἱτισας — ωροισ-ως ικκλησιας· *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. 20, p. 284.

[4] See Mill's *Prolegomena in N. T.* Num. 655, et Fabricius *Praefat. in Hippol.*

[5] Some believe that he was bishop of Porto, in Italy; others, of Portus Romanus, in Arabia Felix. See Fabricius, l. cit. Humann asserts, that he was not a spiritual, but a temporal επισκοπος.

3. *Ammonius.*

Ammonius (whom Eusebius and Jerome suppose to have been the celebrated Alexandrian philosopher Ammonius Saccas,) composed a Harmony of the Four Gospels, in which he had used the Gospel of Saint Matthew as a foundation.[1] That which we possess at present under his name is, if not entirely forged, at least very much mutilated.[2] I therefore reckon this work among the lost writings of antiquity, and would proceed directly to the catalogues of Origen, but have yet to remark, that

4. *Julius Africanus,*

Who flourished in the beginning of this century, has afforded an evidence for the authenticity of the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke, in the epistle to Aristides, in which he endeavours to remove the apparent contradiction in the genealogy of Christ as delivered by these Evangelists.[3]

5. *Origen.*

Origen, the most learned and laborious of all the fathers, who was in such high estimation even among the heathen philosophers, that they dedicated their writings to him, and transmitted them to him for his revisal,[1] has particularly distinguished himself by his labours on the biblical writings. He not only composed a celebrated critical work on the Old Testament, but wrote also a threefold exposition of the books of the whole Bible; *Scholia*, or short notes; *Tomes*, or extensive commentaries, in which he employed all his learning, critical, sacred, and profane; and *Tracts*, or homilies to the people.[2] Of these only a small portion is come down to us, and that for the most part in Latin translations made by Jerome or Rufinus; the rest have been destroyed by the ravages of time.

He is the first who has given us a perfect catalogue of those books which Christians unanimously, or at least the major part of them, have considered as genuine writings of the apostles, and as works of divine inspiration. In his thirteenth homily upon Genesis,[3] he discovers in the servants of Isaac, who dug cisterns, a type of the scriptural writers. "His servants," says he, "are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; his servants also are Peter, James, Jude, and the Apostle Paul, who all dig the wells of the New Testament." In the same manner he allegorizes[4] the history of Joshua, in his seventh homily on this book.[5] "When our Lord Jesus Christ came, of whom that son of Nave was a type, he sent forth the priests, his apostles, with trumpets, from which they sounded the heavenly doctrine. Matthew sounds first with his priestly trumpet in his Gospel. Mark also, and Luke, and John, sounded each his own trumpet. In like manner Peter sounds aloud with the two trumpets of his epistles; as does James also, and Jude. John sounds again with his trumpet in his Epistles and in the Revelation, and Luke in his Acts of the Apostles. Last of all appeared he who said of himself, 'and last of all God appointed me an apostle,' and thundered with the trumpets of his fourteen epistles so powerfully, that the walls of Jericho, and all the machines of superstition, and the doctrines of the philosophers fell to the ground."

The passages here quoted are extant at present only in the Latin version. Eusebius has been at the pains to collect in a particular chapter,[6] the catalogue of the books of the New Testament from the works of Origen. From his Commentary upon the Gospel of Saint Matthew he copies the following passage, which determines what histories of the life of Jesus were universally received among the Christians:—"I have learnt by tradition (the evidences of antiquity) concerning the four Gospels, which are exclusively received without dispute by the whole Church of God under heaven, that the first was written by Saint Matthew, who composed it in the Hebrew language for the use of the proselytes from Judaism; the second by Saint Mark; the third by Saint Luke; and the last by Saint John." Concerning the epistles of the apostles, the historian gives us from the "Commentaries upon Saint John's Gospel," and the "Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews," the following information:—"Saint Paul did not write to all the communities which he himself had established, and the epistles which he did write are not long. Saint Peter has left one epistle universally acknowledged, the second also ought not to be entirely excluded from the number of his works, because the matter is still doubtful. Saint John has written a Gospel, the Revelation, and a short epistle. The second and third epistles ought not to be entirely rejected, since they were considered by various people as genuine works of Saint John. The Epistle

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. 19, p. 282. Ejusd. epistola ad Carpianum, which is prefixed to his *Harmony.* Hieronymus, *De vir. Illustr.* cap. 55.

[2] See Wetstein, *Prolegom. ad N. T.* tom. i. p. 65, seq. Comp. Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 413, and the following pages.

[3] See the extract from the above mentioned epistle in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. 7, pp. 21—25.

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. 19, p. 279.

[2] Hieronymus, Prolegom. in Ezechiel. He superintended also a very accurate edition of the whole New Testament, Hieronymus in Matth. xxiv. 36. Origenes in Joan. 1. Comp. Ernesti De Origene interpr. gr. auct.—in the Opusc. Theol. p. 306, seq.

[3] Operum, tom. ii. p. 95, edit. De la Rue.

[4] Concerning this pernicious and absurd mode of interpretation, see above, p. 22.

[5] Oper. tom. ii. p. 412.

[6] Cap. 25, lib. vi. pp. 289—292. The title of the chapter is, ὁπως των ενδιαθηκων γεγραφων εμνημονευσεν, namely, Origen.

to the Hebrews could not well come from Saint Paul, because the Greek in which it is written is more elegant than that of the other epistles of this apostle. In all probability the subject-matter was furnished by Saint Paul, but the construction of the words is the work of some other person who recorded the thoughts of the apostle, and illustrated them with various remarks." This is Origen's review of the writings of the New Testament; I will insert below the whole passage of Eusebius, from which I have here only extracted certain parts.[7] Whoever desires to receive farther information of this teacher's evidences for the New Testament, may consult Lardner's *Credibility*, in which this article is treated with most particular attention.

SECT. II. — INFORMATION COLLECTED BY EUSEBIUS FROM THE WORKS OF THE THREE FIRST CENTURIES.

Had the writers of the two first centuries possessed the same anxious care for posterity which Origen evinced, we should have been able to prove the authenticity of the books of the New Testament with greater ease and more satisfaction. Yet Eusebius has, in a certain degree, supplied the loss. This father of ecclesiastical history assures us that he had read the works of Christian antiquity with great diligence, and especially with the view of ascertaining what writings had been received since the origin of Christianity as genuine works of the evangelists and apostles. He imparts the result of this inquiry in several particular chapters of his *Ecclesiastical History*. In the third book[1] he treats of the Epistles of the Apostles; respecting which he had found in the works of the first and second centuries the following information: — "That the First Epistle of Saint Peter has always been universally received as divine; but that called his Second Epistle, although not received as divine, *ενδιαθηκος*, has nevertheless been carefully studied as an useful work. That the fourteen epistles which go under the name of Saint Paul, have been universally revered as divine Scriptures, except that some have doubted concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews, because the Romish Church did not consider it to be the work of Saint Paul.[2] That Saint Luke, a physician, has left us two books, divinely inspired, namely, a Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles; and that many of the ancients were of opinion, that Saint Paul means this gospel whenever he speaks of some gospel of his (Saint Paul's) own. That the Gospels were written in the following order of time; Saint Matthew's first of all for the Hebrews, and in the Hebrew language; then Saint Mark's, which was composed at the request of the Christians at Rome; afterwards that of Saint Luke, who was induced to undertake it from the spurious gospels which were at that time in circulation; and that last of all Saint John had perused the three preceding, and confirmed them; yet, as they related only the actions of Christ which took place after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, he therefore had thought it necessary to write his Gospel, and supply in it what was wanting in the others: and that he in particular had received the matter concerning the divinity of Christ from the Holy Ghost. That besides this Gospel, the first Epistle, which bears the name of Saint John, has been universally ascribed to him both by ancients and moderns; that the second and third Epistles were rejected by some; and that the majority were perfectly in doubt concerning the Revelation."[3]

[7] Loc. cit. pp. 290, 291. Ε*ν δε τω πρωτω των εις το κατα Ματθαιον ευαγγελιον, τον εκκλησιαστικον φυλαττων κανονα, μονα τεσσαρα ειδεναι ευαγγελια μαρτυρεται, ωδε πως γραφων· ως εν παραδοσει μαθων περι των τεσσαρων ευαγγελιων, α και μονα αναντιρρητα εστιν εν τη υπο τη ηρανη εκκλησια τυ Θευ· ότι πρωτον μεν γεγραπται το κατα τον ποτε τελωνην, υστερον δε αποστολυ Ιησυ Χριστυ Ματθαιον, εκδεδωκοτα αυτο τοις απο Ιυδαισμυ πιστευσασι, γραμμασιν εβραικοις συνετεταγμενον· δευτερον δε το κατα Μαρκον, ως Πετρος υρχησαστο αυτω πειησαντα, ον και υιον εν τη καθολικη επιστολη δια των ωμολογησε φησκων, ασπαζεται υμας ή εν Βαβυλωνι συνεκλεκτη, και Μαρκος, ὁ υιος μυ· και τριτον το κατα Λουκαν, το υπο Παυλυ επαινουμενον ευαγγελιον, τοις απο των εθνων πιστοηκοτα· ιτι πασι το κατα Ιωαννην· και εν τω πεμπτω δε των εις το κατα Ιωαννην εξηγητικων, ὁ αυτος ταυτα περι των επιστολων των Αποστολων φησιν· ὁ δε ικανωθεις διδασκος γινεσθαι της καινης διαθηκης ε γραμματος ελλα πνευματος Παυλος· ὁ απεληρωκως το ευαγγελιον απο Ιερουσαλημ και κυκλω μεχρι τυ Ιλλυρικυ, ουδε πασαις εγραψεν, αις ιδιδαξεν εκκλησιας· αλλα και εις εγραψεν, ολιγους στχους επιστειλε· Πετρος δε εφ' ῳ οικοδομειται ή Χριστυ εκκλησια, ης πυλαι ᾅδυ ε κατισχυσουσι, μιαν επιστολην ομολογουμενην καταλελοιπεν· εσῳ δε και δευτεραν, αμφισβαλεται γας· τι δει περι του αναπεσοντος λεγειν επι το σηθος του Ιησυ, Ιωαννα; ὁς ευαγγελιον ἑν καταλελοιπεν, ομολογων δυναισθαι τοσαυτα ποιησειν, ἁ ουδε ὁ κοσμος χωρησει εδυνατο· εγραψε δε και την αποκαλυψιν, κελευθεις σιωπησαι και μη γραψαι τας των ἑπτα βροντων φωνας· καταλελοιπε δε και επιστολην πανυ ολιγων στχων· εσῳ δε και δευτεραν και τριτην· επει ε παντες φασι γνησιους ειναι ταυτας· πλην εκ εισι στχων αμφοτεραι ἑκατον· ιτι προς τουτοις πεμπτης της προς Εβραιους επιστολης εν ταις εις αυτην ομιλιαις ταυτα διαλαμβανει· ὁτι ὁ χαρακτηρ της λεξεως της προς Εβραιους επιγεγραμμενης επιστολης, ουκ εχει το εν λογῳ ιδιωτικον τη Αποστολῳ, ὁμολογησαντος ἑαυτον ιδιωτην ειναι τῳ λογῳ τους· εστι τη φρασει· αλλα εστι ή επιστολη συνθετοι της λεξεως Ἑλληνικωτερα, πας ὁ επιστασμενος κρινειν φρασεων διαφορας, ὁμολογησαι αν· παλιν τι αν ὁτι τα νοηματα της επιστολης θαυμασια εστι, και ου δευτερα των Αποστολικων ὁμολογουμενων γραμματων, και τουτο αν συμβησαι ειναι αληθες, πας ὁ παρειτων τη αναγνωσει τη Αποστολικη· τουτοις μεθ' ἑτερα επιφερει λεγων. εγω δε αποφαινομενος ειπομι' αν, ὁτι τα μεν νοηματα τυ Αποστολυ εστιν ή δε φρασις και ή συνθεσις, απομνημονευσαντος τινος τα αποστολικα, και ὡσπερει σχολιογραφησαντος τα ειρημενα ὑπο τυ διδασκαλυ· ει τις εν εκκλησια εχει ταυτην επιστολην ὡς Παυλυ, ἀυτη ευδοκιμειτο και επι τυτω· ε γας εικη οι αρχαιοι ανδρες ὡς Παυλυ παραδεδωκασι· τις δε ὁ γραψας την επιστολην, το μεν αληθες Θεος ειδει.

[1] Caps. 3, 4, and 24, pp. 89—92, and 115—118.

[2] Τινες ηθετηκασι την προς Εβραιους, προς της 'Ρωμαιων εκκλησιας ὡς μη Παυλυ ουσαν αυτην αντιλεγεσθαι φησαντες·

[3] 'Η πρωτεια των επιστολων παρα τε τοις νυν και τοις επ αρχαιοις αναμφιλεκτος ὁμολογηται· αντιλεγονται δε αι λοιπαι δυο της δ' αποκαλυψιως εφ' ἑκατεροι επι νυν παρα τοις πολλοις

Eusebius has given the most perfect account of this subject in the twenty-fifth chapter of the third book,[4] in which he collects and lays before the reader the result of the information contained in detached parts of the preceding books.

In this he delivers not his own private opinion, but the opinion of the Church, εκκλησιαστικη παραδοσις, the sum of what he had found in the writings of the primitive Christians. The cited passage contains consequently the opinion of the whole Christian Church during the three first centuries; and a proper insight into its meaning is of great importance to us. Eusebius unites the νοθαι γραφαι (those writings which were actually spurious, or thought such) with the αντιλεγομεναι (the doubtful.) After having spoken of the αντιλεγομεναι, he immediately adds, εν τοις νοθοις και κατατεταχθω των Παυλε πραξεων η γραφη, ὁ, τε λεγομενος Ποιμην, "among the spurious are to be reckoned the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd," &c. Whence it appears to me clear, that he speaks in this passage of the anthenticity of the books, whether they are genuine or spurious, and not of their divine inspiration. Again, he calls the ὁμολογουμεναι γραφαι (universally received books) also, αληθεις και απλαστοι, genuine and not forged; and opposes them to those which were falsely attributed to the apostles, ταις ονοματι των Αποστολων προφερομεναις. He places the Revelation of Saint John also under the νοθα or αντιλεγομενα, for this reason, because the majority of the ancients doubted whether they should consider it as the writing of Saint John the Apostle, or of some other person, consequently as genuine or spurious. Lastly, he also classes the Shepherd of Hermas, the Revelation of Peter, the Acts of Paul, and the Epistle of Barnabas, under the νοθα (or, αντιλεγομενα.) Now, among the ancients none ever thought these books divine,[5] but their authenticity indeed has been called in question.

These arguments evince, if I mistake not, that Eusebius speaks here of the authenticity, not of the divine inspiration, of those writings which existed in his time under the names of the apostles, evangelists, and apostolical men. His intention in this place is not to mention what writings were considered as divine, but to ascertain the three following points: —1. What writings were received by the ancients as genuine works of the apostles, evangelists, and apostolical men; 2. Of what writings the authenticity had been called in question; and, 3. Those which were entirely rejected as spurious.

On these points the opinion of the three first centuries was as follows:—

I. Ὁμολογουμεναι γραφαι (ανωμολογημεναι; or, αληθεις και απλαστοι,) writings which were universally received as the genuine works of the persons whose names they bear.

In this class Eusebius reckons,—1. The four Gospels; 2. The Acts of the Apostles; 3. The Epistles of Saint Paul; 4. The First Epistle of Saint John; 5. The First Epistle of Saint Peter. The Revelation of Saint John might also perhaps be placed in this class, because some think its authenticity incontrovertible, yet the majority leave the matter undetermined.[6]

II. Αντιλεγομεναι, writings on whose authenticity the ancients were not unanimous; which some held to be supposititious.[7]

According to Eusebius, even these have the majority of voices among the ancients in their favour. He expressly calls them, γνωριμα ὁμως τοις πολλοις (writings acknowledged by most to be genuine,) and παρα πλειστοις των εκκλησιαστικων γινωσκομενα (received by the majority.) A few doubted of their authenticity, and therefore Eusebius ranks them under the contested, αντιλεγομενα, or νοθα.

In this class he enumerates, of the writings of the New Testament, 1. The Epistle of Saint James; 2. The Epistle of Saint Jude; 3. The Second Epistle of Saint Peter; 4. The Second and Third Epistles of Saint John. The Revelation of Saint John, he adds, is also by some placed in this class.[8]

And, of other writings, the Acts of Saint Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Revelation of Saint Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Doctrines of the Apostles, and the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

III. Ατοπα και δυσσεβη, (absurd and impious;) writings which had been universally rejected as evidently spurious.

In this class he includes the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, and of Matthias; the Acts of Andrew, of John, and of other apostles. These writings, says he, contain evident errors, are written in a style entirely different from that of the apostles, and have not been thought worthy of being mentioned by any one of the ancients.

περιελκεται ἡ δοξα. Loc cit. p. 118. But concerning the Revelation, "Even yet," (that is, notwithstanding all preceding inquiries,) "the majority are in doubt," (know not whether to hold it genuine or spurious.)

[4] The commencement of the chapter is as follows: Ευλογον δ' ενταυθα γενομενος αναπεζαλαιωσασθαι τας διηλωθεισας της καινης διαθηκης γραφας.

[5] See above, p. 15, note [12]

[6] See above, p. 33.

[7] He names these writings also νοθαι γραφαι, "spurious writings;" that is, according to the opinion of some. These νοθαι do not, therefore, compose a distinct class, as is the general supposition.

[8] For in early times some believed that this work was not composed by John the apostle, but by a presbyter of the same name, or by some other person. See the following 5th chapter of this book.

CHAPTER IV.

A SUMMARY RECAPITULATION OF THE EVIDENCES MENTIONED ABOVE.

I will now reduce into order the depositions of the witnesses, who have been already separately examined, and enable the reader to perceive at one view what has been the opinion of men during the first two centuries and half on each individual book of the New Testament.

I. *The Gospel by Saint Matthew*

Is pronounced to be a genuine work of the evangelist whose name it bears,—1. By Papias, 21;[1] 2. By many ancient writers of the first century, consulted by Eusebius, 21; 3. By Justin Martyr, 24; 4. Tatian, 29; 5. Irenæus, 25; 6. Athenagoras, 26; 7. Theophilus of Antioch, 27; 8. Clement of Alexandria, 27; 9. Tertullian, 28; 10. Ammonius, 32; 11. Julius Africanus, 32; 12. Origen, 32; and by all the primitive writers, without exception, whom Eusebius had read, 34.

And this may be inferred also, yet only with a degree of probability, from the writings of Barnabas, 13; Clement of Rome, 15; Ignatius, 19; and Polycarp, 20.[2]

II. *The Gospel by Saint Mark*

Is declared to be a genuine writing of the evangelist to whom it is ascribed, by,—1. Papias, 21; 2. Many ancient writers of the first century, consulted by Eusebius, 21; 3. Justin Martyr, 24; 4. Tatian, 29; 5. Irenæus, 25; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 27; 7. Tertullian, 28; 8. Ammonius, 32; 9. Origen, 32; and by all the ancients whom Eusebius had read, 34.

Clement of Rome, 15; and Ignatius, 19, were, probably, of the same opinion.[3]

III. *The Gospel and Acts of the Apostles by Saint Luke,*

Are adopted as the undeniable works of Saint Luke, the companion and disciple of Saint Paul, by,—1. The ancient writers of the first century, consulted by Eusebius, 21; 2. Justin Martyr, 24; 3. Tatian, 29; 4. Irenæus, 25; 5. Clement of Alexandria, 27; 6. Tertullian, 28; 7. Ammonius, 32; 8. Julius Africanus, 32; 9. Origen, 32; and by all the ancient writers quoted by Eusebius, 34.

Clement of Rome, 15; Ignatius, 19; Polycarp, 20; and the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 30, may also, perhaps, be reckoned among the number of witnesses.[4]

IV. *The Gospel by Saint John*

Is, with great unanimity and particular respect, considered as the genuine writing of this apostle, by,—1. The ancient writers of the first century, consulted by Eusebius, 21; 2. By Justin Martyr, 24; 3. Tatian, 24, 29; 4. Irenæus, 25; 5. Theophilus of Antioch, 27; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 27; 7. Tertullian, 28; 8. Ammonius, 32; 9. Origen, 32; and by all the fathers cited by Eusebius, 34.

To these might be added the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 30.[5]

V. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans*

Is declared to be authentic by,—1. Irenæus, 25; 2. Theophilus of Antioch, 27; 3. Clement of Alexandria, 27; 4. Tertullian, 28; 5. Caius, 31; 6. Origen, 32; and by all the ancients noticed by Eusebius, 34.

It would appear that this is also testified by Ignatius, 19; Polycarp, 20; and the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 30.

VI. *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*

Is considered as genuine by,—1. Clement of Rome, 15; 2. Polycarp, 20; 3. Tatian, 29; 4. Irenæus, 25; 5. Athenagoras, 26; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 27; 7. Tertullian, 28; 8. Caius, 31; 9. Origen, 32; and by all the ancients found in Eusebius, 34.

To the class of probable witnesses belongs Ignatius, 19.

VII. *The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*

Has the express testimony of Irenæus, 25; Clement of Alexandria, 27; Tertullian, 28; Caius, 31; Origen, 32; and of all the ecclesiastical fathers to whom Eusebius appeals, 34.

VIII. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians*

Is declared to be authentic by Irenæus, 25;

[1] The figures after the names of the different witnesses enumerated in this chapter, refer to the pages of this work, where their evidences may be found.

[2] Lardner has collected together the evidences of the later witnesses in his Supplement to the first book of the second part of the *Gospel History*, vol. i. pp. 95—102, of the first edition. He has treated of them more copiously in the work which has been so often mentioned, his *Credibility of the Gospel History*. In the Supplement he has generally confined himself to those witnesses who determine also the time when the different books of Holy Writ were composed. The reader will therefore find more witnesses enumerated in my catalogue than in his.

[3] For the later witnesses, see Lardner's Supplement, vol. i. pp. 173—180, of the first edition.

[4] For the later witnesses, see Lard. Sup. i. 218—227, 1st edit.

[5] Ibid. pp. 382—390. The Alogi, a sect that existed in the second century, are said to have rejected it. But we have no information concerning these Alogi that can be depended on; for, properly speaking, we have none else besides the later and uncertain accounts of Philastrius and Epiphanius. And were the case otherwise, still what can the testimony, or rather the bare assertion of anonymous persons avail, when opposed to the unanimous, considerate, and weighty evidences of all the ancients, both learned and unlearned. See Walch's *History of Heresies*, vol. i. p. 569, seq. of the original; and Professor Schroeckh's *Eccles. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 175, seq. of the original.

Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the ancients found in Eusebius, 34.

IX. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians*

Has the testimony of Ignatius, 18; Polycarp, 20 ; Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and of all the primitive writers found in Eusebius, 34.

X. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians*

Has the evidence of Polycarp, 19 ; Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and of all the ancients noticed by Eusebius, 34.

And also, as appears probable, of the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 30.

XI. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Colossians*

Is attested by Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the ecclesiastical fathers consulted by Eusebius, 34.

XII. *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians*

Is expressly pronounced by Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the ancients mentioned by Eusebius, 34.

Probably also by Polycarp, 19.

XIII. *The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians*

By Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the ancients found in Eusebius, 34.

Perhaps by Polycarp, 19.

XIV. *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to Timothy,*

By Irenæus, 25 ; Theophilus of Antioch, 27 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the primitive writers noticed by Eusebius, 34.

And, with some degree of probability, by Polycarp, 20.

XV. *The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to Timothy,*

By Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the fathers found in Eusebius, 34.

XVI. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to Titus,*

By Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the ancients mentioned by Eusebius, 34 ; to be genuine works of this apostle.

XVII. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to Philemon*

Is but rarely mentioned by the ecclesiastical fathers in their writings, on account of its brevity and peculiar contents. Nevertheless, Irenæus, 25 ; Caius, 31 ; Origen, 32 ; and all the ancients cited by Eusebius, 34 ; have pronounced it authentic.

Which is also testified, apparently, by Tertullian, 28.

XVIII. *The First Epistle of Saint Peter*

Is attested by Papias, 21 ; Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the ancients found in Eusebius, 34.

To these may be added, perhaps, Polycarp, 20.

XIX. *The Second Epistle of Saint Peter*

Has the evidence of Origen, 32, who nevertheless speaks in some degree doubtfully ; and of the greater part of the ancients consulted by Eusebius, 34.[6]

XX. *The First Epistle of Saint John*

Is declared genuine by Papias, 21 : Irenæus, 25 ; Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; Origen, 32 ; and by all the ancients found in Eusebius, 34.

XXI. XXII. *The Second and Third Epistles of Saint John.*

Origen, 32, and many of the ancients, 34, doubted of the authenticity of the Second and Third Epistles of Saint John. But the majority of voices, 34, pronounced them genuine works of this apostle.[7]

XXIII. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Hebrews*

Has the express testimony of Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian, 28 ; and of all the primitive writers noticed by Eusebius, 34.

To these may be added Clement of Rome, 15 ; and Justin Martyr, 23.

XXIV. *The Epistle of Saint James*

Is attested by the major part of the ancients whom Eusebius quotes, 34 ; to which the concordant testimony of the old Syriac Version adds considerable weight.[8]

XXV. *The Epistle of Saint Jude,*

Is asserted to be genuine by Clement of Alexandria, 27 ; Tertullian 28 ; Origen, 32 ; and by the greater part of the ancients noticed by Eusebius, 34.[9]

[6] See Lardner's *Supplement*, vol. iii. pp. 215—224, 1st edit. and Michaelis's *Introduction to the N. T.* vol. iv. pp. 346—356, of the learned Mr Marsh's translation.

[7] For the three Epistles of Saint John, see Lardner's *Supplement*, vol. iii. pp. 263—267, 1st edit. ; and for the two last, Michaelis's *Introduction to the N. T.* vol. iv. pp. 442—445, of Mr Marsh's translation.

[8] See Michaelis's *Introduction to the N. T.* vol. iv. pp. 308—314, of Mr Marsh's translation ; and Lardner's *Supplement*, vol. iii. pp. 85—91, 1st edit.

[9] Compare Lardner's *Supplement*, vol. iii. pp. 327—334, with Michaelis's *Introduction*, vol. iv. pp. 374—395, of Mr Marsh's translation.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN.

The Revelation of Saint John, as it is called, is so much distinguished from all the other writings of the New Testament, both by its contents and style, that we must separate it from them, and investigate its authenticity in a particular inquiry.

SECT. I.—THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.

The whole book is entirely occupied with the description of three visions which were shewn to the author. First, there appears to him, whilst in a trance, (εγενομην εν πνευματι,[1]) One, in human form, surrounded with seven candlesticks, clad in a long robe, and girt with a golden girdle; his head and hair were white as wool, or as snow, and his eyes like flames of fire; his feet like molten metal, and his voice like the noise of a rapid torrent; in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance shone like the sun in its meridian splendour. This Being dictates to him epistles to the presidents of the seven Christian communities in Asia. These seven epistles contain many forcible exhortations to zeal in virtue or brotherly love, and powerful consolations, especially for the martyrs to this virtue. But they are composed almost entirely from passages of the Old Testament and the Gospels.

Afterwards, (second vision, iv.—xix.) the author falls into another trance; and sees the Almighty on a majestic throne, holding in his hands a book with seven seals; and Christ, in the form of a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, who is alone capable of taking this book from the hands of God, and of opening its seals, (iv. v.) He opens the first seal, and the Conqueror appears, (vi. 1, 2:) he opens the second, and War comes on the earth, (vi. 3, 4:) the third, and Famine displays itself, (vi. 5, 6:) the fourth is opened, and immediately come forth Death and the Grave, (vi. 7, 8.) After opening the fifth seal, those who had been innocently slain call for revenge, (vi. 9, 10.) When the sixth is opened, frightful appearances are seen, and all things tremble,(vi. 12—17.) But these plagues are only the forerunners of the terrible calamity which succeeds on the opening of the seventh seal. Wherefore, before this circumstance takes place, the servants of God, who are destined to escape this dreadful calamity, are marked by an angel on the forehead; an hundred and forty-four thousand, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The writer now beheld an innumerable multitude out of every nation standing before the throne and the Lamb, in white garments, with palms in their hands, and crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne! and unto the Lamb!" These were come out of great tribulation, and had washed and purified their garments in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they stand before the throne of God, serve him day and night in his temple, and He who sitteth on the throne covereth them as with a pavilion; they no more hunger nor thirst; neither the sun nor any other heat incommodes them; they are pastured by the Lamb, who conducts them to the fountains of life, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes. After this episode, (vii.) follows the opening of the seventh seal. And, lo!

Seven angels with seven trumpets appear, (viii.—xiv.) The sighs of the saints resound before the throne of God; immediately these seven angels make themselves ready. The first sounds, and instantly hail and fire, mixed with blood, fall on the earth. The other angels sound successively; and a great mountain, as it were burning with fire, is cast into the sea. The third part of the sea becomes bitter, and a third part of the creatures therein die. A star, named Wormwood, falls from heaven, (viii. 10, 11:) the third part of the sun, of the moon, and of the stars is darkened, (viii. 12.) A star falls from heaven, and to him is given the key of the bottomless pit, which he opens, (ix. 1, 2:) the four angels, which were bound by the river Euphrates, are loosed, (ix. 14:) a woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, is in travail, and is delivered, &c. At last the seventh trumpet sounds; and now are made various great and terrible preparations, (in the long episode, x.—xiv.) An angel commands Saint John to write down every thing he beheld; another gives him a book to swallow, &c. A woman in particular appears, clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. She is in travail. And, behold! a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; whose tail drew away the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them on the earth. It placed itself before the woman in order to devour her child. But she brought forth a son who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The woman then fled into the wilderness. But in heaven commences a war. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who is Satan, and his angels. Michael conquers, and the dragon is cast on the earth. Now two frightful beasts arose against the woman, her son, and their followers. The first, extremely hideous, was

[1] Chap. i. 10. Comp. chap. iv. 2.

like a leopard, his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. The other had two horns as of a lamb; his number was six hundred three score and six, &c. Afterwards the author saw a white cloud, and upon it sat, He, in human form,[2] with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand, (xiv. 14, and following verses.) There arises a great commotion in heaven. And then appear

Seven angels with seven vials full of the wrath of God, (xv.—xix.) which are poured out successively; almost in the same manner and with the same effects as happened before, when the seven trumpets were sounded. After all the seven had been poured out, there appeared a woman sitting on a beast; clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls; in her hand she held a golden cup full of abominations, and the filthiness of her fornications; and upon her forehead was her name thus written, "Mystery! Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth!" Babylon the Great is destroyed; on which event heaven resounds with songs of praise. And now He, who with his heavenly armies had caused the destruction of Babylon, returns to heaven. This section is almost entirely composed of images and expressions from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Again, (third vision, xx. to the end of the book,) an angel came down from heaven, who had the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain. He laid hold on the dragon, who is Satan, and bound him. Thus bound, he cast him into the bottomless pit, where he was to remain a thousand years; and after that be loosed again for a short time. Thrones appear; and they to whom a power of judgment is committed, seated themselves thereon. The souls of those who had been slain on account of the doctrine of Jesus, revived, and ruled with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years had expired. This was the first resurrection. After the expiration of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed from his imprisonment, and seduce the nations which are in the four ends of the earth. Then he beheld a white throne, and He sat thereon from whose look earth and heaven fled. The dead, great and small, stand before the throne; books are opened, according to which they are to be judged. One book, in particular, is opened, (xx. 12, and following verses,) the book of life; and whoever was not found written therein was cast into the lake of fire, together with Death and the Grave. Now appeared to him a new heaven, and a new earth. And he beheld the holy city, the new Jerusalem, come down out of heaven from God: its wall was of jasper; the city itself, pure gold; each of its twelve foundations was a precious stone, jasper, sapphire, &c.; each of its twelve gates a pearl;[3] and the streets of gold. But no temple was there; for God and the Lamb are its temple, (xxi. 22, and following verses.) The groundwork of the imagery here also is taken chiefly from Isaiah and Ezekiel; but the poetical dress in which it is clad, the precious stones, pearls, &c. is the author's own production.

The book concludes with this assertion, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

[2] See above, p. 37, 1st col.

SECT. II. — THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

Never did a book exist on whose contents such different opinions have been formed. In the earlier times of Christianity, when its followers were persecuted by the Roman emperors, the Revelation was considered as a prophecy of the speedy destruction of Gentile Rome. Irenæus[1] thought that the number "six hundred threescore and six"[2] indicated ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ. How it was understood after Christianity itself had ascended the imperial throne in the person of Constantine, is unknown. But when the Romish Bishops had erected the horrid system of papal tyranny,[3]

[3] ὁ Μαργαρίτης means in the Chaldee not only a "pearl," but likewise a "precious stone;" see Buxtorf, Lex. Talmud, in v. But here it is expressly distinguished from the precious stones, λίθῳ τιμίῳ, chap. xxi. 21, comp. ver. 19, 20.

[1] Advers. Hæres. v. 26, 30. [2] See beginning of this page.

[3] In the sixth century the bishops of Rome made pretensions to the sovereignty over the whole world, as a right bestowed upon them by God, from being, as they asserted, the successors of Saint Peter, and the vicars of Christ. In the eighth, from the grants of Pepin and Charlemagne, they became temporal lords. In the ninth, they placed themselves on an equality with princes and emperors, and in some cases claimed the superiority. Now it was that they published, if they did not forge, the Decretales and Donatio Constantini Magni. The eleventh century brought this infamous usurpation to its maturity. Hildebrand, a blacksmith's son, who, on being raised to the papal see, took the name of Gregory the Seventh, summoned the emperor Henry the Fourth to appear at Rome under the penalty of ecclesiastical censures; and on his not appearing, pronounced him excommunicated, and released all his subjects from their oath of fidelity. The emperor was at length obliged to comply; but was not received again into the pale of the Church until he had stood barefoot and without nourishment during three days in the castle of Canossa, where the pope then resided, and had humbly prayed for favour. Lastly, since the thirteenth century, they exercised sovereign authority over all the monarchs of the West; pope Innocent the Third deposed the emperor Otto the Fourth, and compelled John, king of England, to make his kingdom tributary to the Romish see. See Mornæi *Mysterium Iniquitatis*; and Cyprian, *History of Popery*.

and tormented and murdered all that opposed it, Joachim, an abbot in Calabria, during the thirteenth century, pointed the book against the Pope. The Franciscans, on being oppressed by the papal see, followed him. Many of the Protestants eagerly embraced this opinion: and since that time it is become the ruling sentiment among this class of Christians. On the other hand, the Romish church has retaliated, and discovered in it Luther, Calvin, or some one or other of the reformers: nor have there been wanting men, who have fancied that they perceived allusions even to Mahomet. Innumerable are the individual interpretations which have been given in modern times. The afflicted Protestants in Hungary and Bohemia, during the persecutions which were excited against them in the seventeenth century, perceived many prophecies therein which afforded them much consolation. Some imagine it to be a perfect history of the Christian church, from its commencement even to the end of the world. Many learned men, and among these Luther and Calvin, have never attempted an exposition, because they considered it a fruitless labour. Others, lastly, (Wetstein and D'Aubitz in particular) have explained it as indicating the destruction of the Jewish state and divine service. And if any interpretation has the slightest degree of light and probability, it is this.[4]

SECT. III. — REMARKS ON ITS CONTENTS.

1. It stands perfectly insulated in the Bible. Even from the slightest perusal, it will clearly appear, that this book is entirely different from all the other writings not only of the New Testament, but also of the Old. In the other books of the New Testament historical matters and doctrines are delivered in the common language of men. There exists nothing of divine revelations shewn in a trance through figures, except in the passage of the Acts of the Apostles, x. 3—7; and even here the explanation is immediately subjoined, (in the 8th and following verses.) The prophets of the Old Testament, indeed, have delivered their doctrines frequently in visions; their writings often contain those of a similar nature. But entire and mere vision like this, without any subjoined explanation, exists in no book whatever of the Bible, except in the Apocalypse.

2. The author is a person called John; but whether the apostle of that name or not, he does not inform us. The writer calls himself repeatedly John, not only in the preface of the book, (i. 1,) but frequently also in other places, (i. 4, 9; xxii. 8,) where it might have been by no means expected. He professes himself a servant of Jesus Christ, (i. 4,) and a teacher of his religion, (i. 2;) and asserts that he had been on the island of Patmos, on account of the confession of the doctrine of Jesus, (ii. 9,) but whether to preach it there, or banished for having preached it, he does not disclose. And here, in a trance, he saw these visions. But he never suffers even a single word to escape him by which we might be enabled to discover that he was the apostle of the same name. He never, like the evangelist, calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned on his bosom at supper," (John, xiii.) Not a trace of the apostle's favourite figures and expressions, light, life, &c. is to be found here. On the contrary, the frequent mention of his name is at perfect variance with the custom of the apostle, who never names himself either in his Gospel or Epistles.

3. The book contains many fine passages. Notwithstanding its impenetrable obscurity, we meet with some noble passages, distinguished both for their matter and composition. Besides what has been said above concerning the seven epistles to the Christian communities, we may add, that however ignorant we are to what the destruction in chap. vi. 12—17 alludes, the painting is very sublime. Animated and affecting is the description of the bliss of the heroic workers of virtue, (vii. 9—17;) and majestic is the account of the redemption of the human race through Jesus, (xii. 7—12.)

4. It is inexplicable, at least at present. Of what it treats; whether it be a narration or a prophecy; whether it relate to near circumstances, or remote; whether it consist of one whole, or of many unconnected parts; whether all of it, or nothing, be already fulfilled; what may be the meaning of the mysterious numbers, "a time, and times, and half a time," (xii. 14;) of the significant number, "six hundred three score and six," (xiii. 18;) the thousand years, &c. (xx. 4. and following verses;) of the frightful beasts and monsters;[5] in a word, of the entire con-

[4] I will here present the reader with the heads of this interpretation: — 1. Christ takes the book with seven seals from the hand of God, chap. iv. v.; that is, he is commissioned by God to destroy the state and divine worship of the Jews. 2. Seven angels successively sound their trumpets, chap. viii.—xiv.; that is, terrible events precede the destruction. 3. Seven vials filled with the wrath of God are poured out by seven angels, chap. xv.—xix.; that is, that utter destruction is now carried into execution. 4. Christ comes again; the dead are raised, &c. chap. xx.—xxii.; that is, after the coming of Christ to hold judgment on Jerusalem, he will appear again in due time to judge the whole world. In examining this poetical book, we must be governed by the same rules as we adopt when we endeavour to explain the work of any other poet; we must attribute a distinct meaning only to the principal images, and consider all the other separate features of the different images as merely poetical ornament and amplification. Agreeably to this, book, seal, seven seals, trumpets, seven trumpets, &c. have in themselves no particular meaning, but are all nothing more than the poetical dress of the principal images.

[5] See above, p. 37, foot of col. 2.

tents, is most indeterminate and obscure. After the inquiries and assertions of many centuries, we can ascertain of its meaning absolutely nothing. We become confused and disgusted when we dive into expositions so numerous, various, and contradictory. And the Revelation, after all that the learned and unlearned, fanatics, and men of sound understanding, have said and dreamt concerning it, still remains a sealed book. This is the opinion of all, who, from modest distrust of their own penetration, have consulted, I will not say all the interpreters of this book, for that is absolutely impossible, but even a moderate part of them. The late professor Brucker, for instance, says in one of his works, "that he had read a very considerable number of the expositors of this figurative and mystical book, and found incredible contradictions and confusion."

5. Many things in it appear to be erroneous and unchristian. For how shall we harmonize that joy and triumph with which the horrid punishment of their enemies was viewed and published by the saints, with the mild, conciliatory, charitable, and enemy-loving spirit, which exists in the whole New Testament, and particularly in the writings of Saint John, which breathe, as it were, nothing but forgiveness and benevolence? Again, the writer of this book offers at two different times to adore an angel, in the most exact sense of the word, to adore as God. And that not only in the vision, (xix. 9, 10,) but also (xxii. 8, 9) in the usual natural condition of the mind. It is highly improbable that any thing of this kind would be done by a Jew, and yet more improbable by a Christian, but absolutely impossible by an apostle, nay, by him who was the most intimate friend of Jesus! We will pass over the error, as it appears to be, which is met with, (xx. 8,) where the town or kingdom Magog[6] (from Ezekiel, xxxviii. 2) is supposed to be a man; because critics are still in doubt as to the right interpretation of this passage of Ezekiel. Also, in judging of this book, we cannot with propriety say any thing of its numerous grammatical errors, since our present text is extremely defective. And to this subject I will now proceed.

SECT. IV. — OF OUR COMMON TEXT OF THE REVELATION.

Of this book, when compared with the other scriptures of the New Testament, very few manuscripts and ancient versions, and a very small number of extracts in the works of the ancient teachers, are come down to us. About four manuscripts only have any value; the rest are new and worthless. Of these four there are but two complete. Until the time of Wetstein, three manuscripts alone had been collated; and since him, very few, collated with accuracy, have been added to the number. Erasmus, who could make use of one Greek manuscript only, translated the greater part of it from the Vulgate; he even made many alterations purely conjectural. From this edition of Erasmus, our common text of the Revelation of Saint John is for the most part a copy. Destitute therefore of credible manuscripts, versions, and other writings of high antiquity, amidst a multitude of omissions, transpositions, additions, and alterations, we cannot settle the genuine reading. The text of this book is consequently uncertain, even in the best editions.[7]

[6] Magog, a city, or a kingdom; Gog, the prince of Magog.

SECT. V. — THE OPINION OF ANCIENT WRITERS ON THIS BOOK.

The scarcity of critical aid, and, a necessary consequence, the uncertainty of the text, will not astonish us, if we revert to antiquity, and inquire what opinion the ancients had of the Revelation. In the two first centuries this book was rejected by Christian teachers of great respectability. Papias,[1] even if he had not been, as Irenæus has asserted, a disciple of Saint John himself, was certainly a contemporary of this apostle, and indeed bishop of Hierapolis, a town in the vicinity of Ephesus, the place of residence of the apostle, and of the seven Asiatic communities to which the Apocalypse contains epistles. Now this father, whose evidence would be of such great importance in the present inquiry, has not mentioned the Revelation: for Eusebius quotes nothing from him,[2] which he certainly would not have omitted, had he been able, he himself being perfectly in doubt as to its authenticity. Indeed Papias overlooks in his works some other books of the New Testament. But he had not so much reason to notice other books as this, since he was the father of the doctrine of the millennium (the opinion that Christ would reign upon earth a thousand years after the resurrection of the righteous,) which doctrine has always been grounded by all its supporters on the Apocalypse. Eusebius even says,[3] "That Papias was deluded into the opinion of a millennium from an uncertain tradition, and by misunderstanding the apostolical narration," διηγησεις, consequently not apostolic writings. Therefore he either did not know of the Apocalypse, or did not receive it as an apostolical and divine Scripture.[4]

[7] See the editions of the New Testament by Wetstein and Griesbach; and Semler's *Theologische Hermeneutik*, iv. 264.

[1] See above, p. 20. [2] Ibid. p. 20. [3] *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39.

[4] This is acknowledged by Dr Storr, a very learned and acute defender of the authenticity and divinity of this book, in his *New*

Caius,[5] an orthodox and very learned presbyter of the Church of Rome, in the second century, asserted even that Cerinthus, in order to establish the coarse doctrine of the millennium, had falsely attributed it to the apostle Saint John. "Caius, in his Disputation, says," (these are the words of Eusebius, Ecc. Hist. iii. 28, for of the writings of Caius none are now extant) "Cerinthus, by the help of revelations which he insinuated to have been written by a great apostle,[6] imposes upon us a variety of wonderful relations which he pretends were shewn to him by angels,[7] and asserts, that after the resurrection, Christ's palace shall be on earth,[8] and that the flesh (men with carnal bodies) shall dwell again at Jerusalem, and indulge in pleasures and sensual appetites. This enemy of the divine Scriptures says also, in order to deceive, (θελων πλανᾶν) that a thousand years shall be spent in nuptial feasts."[9] The great apostle, by whom the Revelations are pretended to have been written; the wonderful things shewn to him by angels; the palace of Christ on earth, after the resurrection at Jerusalem; the marriage feasts; and the dominion which is to endure for a thousand years, are visibly taken from the Apocalypse. One of the most eloquent defenders of its authenticity confesses himself, that Caius speaks of this book, and not of any other work, as that which Cerinthus had written under the title, αποκαλυψεις.[10] This becomes still more certain, as Dionysius of Alexandria expressly says,[11] that some of the ancients had attributed the book to Cerinthus.

It is this Dionysius who excites in every reflecting and impartial reader the greatest doubt concerning the authenticity of the Apocalypse. He was born at Alexandria, of Gentile parents, his extensive reading led him to Christianity, he became the disciple of Origen, then a presbyter, and lastly, about the year 248, bishop of the Christian community in his native city. His deep penetration and great knowledge of the world, united with the most amiable character, placed him in a condition to do what no one ever has done either before or after him. He held a religious controversy with the followers of Nepos (an Egyptian bishop then lately deceased, who had taught the Millennarian doctrine,) which not only produced no bad consequences, but, on the contrary, convinced his opponents, and inclined them to abandon their error.[12] It is evident from his writings, of which, except two, only fragments preserved in Eusebius are come down to us, and from his life which the same historian relates,[13] that he was a man of distinguished talents, very extensive learning, sound judgment, and what is of the greatest importance, of most excellent character. His amiable modesty and meekness in particular won the hearts of all who knew him intimately; his learning and penetration, united with a fine eloquence, gave him such consequence, that it was customary to choose him umpire in almost all disputes; and by posterity he has been named the great Dionysius. Against the fore-mentioned Nepos (who understood the passages concerning the coming of Christ, especially those in the Apocalypse, literally; and in a particular book which he wrote, "A Confutation of the Allegorists" ελεγχος αλληγορισων, founded on this hypothesis the coarse doctrine of the Millennium,) he composed a work, "Concerning the promises," περι επαγγελιων, in two books. In the second, he treats at large of the Apocalypse. The extracts which Eusebius[14] gives from it, are worthy of being introduced here, for they contain not only much important information and sound criticism on the Revelation; but afford us also a good idea of the learning and mode of thinking of its author, and of the care with which the primitive Christians were accustomed to scrutinize the writings which made any pretensions to be apostolical. "Some of the ancients," says Dionysius, "have entirely rejected this book; refuted it section by section; shewing it to be throughout unintelligible and inconsistent. They assert also, that the title is false, since this is neither a work of Saint John, nor even a Revelation, (αποκαλυψις,) because every thing in it is hidden under a coarse and thick veil. They suppose, that not only no apostle, but no pious member of the church, was its author; but ascribe it to Cerinthus, and the sects called after his name, who were desirous of giving credit to his errors, by affixing to them a respectable name. For from him originated the doctrine, that the kingdom of Christ should be temporal, consisting of those things to which he himself, a totally sensual and carnal man, was most addicted; namely, the satiating of the belly, and the gratification of fleshly lusts, by eating, drinking, marrying, by feasts and feast-offer-

Apology for the Revelation of Saint John, p. 176 of the original. The testimony of Andrew, bishop of Cæsarea, in the sixth century, of whom we know little or nothing, cannot be produced as a proof in opposition to Eusebius; it is, moreover, obscure. See Dr Storr, p. 175.

[5] See above, p. 31.

[6] Δι' αποκαλυψεων ὡς ὑτο Αποστολι μεγαλι γεγραμμενων. Dionysius of Alexandria also calls the book αποκαλυψεις, in the plural. Eusebii *Hist. Eccl.* vii. 25, p. 354, edit. Reading.

[7] Τεραστολογιας ἡμιν, ὡς δι' Αγγελων αυτῳ δεδειγμενας ψευδομενος.

[8] The words in the original are το βασιλειον, and not την βασιλειαν; it must not therefore be rendered, as is done by the Latin translator, regnum Christi. The palace of Christ is the New Jerusalem, chap. xx.

[9] αριθμιον χιλιοντατιας εν γαμῳ ἑορτης γινεσθαι.

[10] See Dr Storr, *New Apology for the Revelation of Saint John.*

[11] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vii. 25.

[12] Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* vii. 24.

[13] Ibid. vi. 29, 35, 40, 42—44, 46; vii. 1, 4—11, 20—26.

[14] Ibid. vii. 25.

ings. But I will not venture to reject the book, since many of the brethren highly esteem it;[15] for I believe that its contents surpass my comprehension, are concealed and wonderful. Although I do not understand it, yet I suppose that the words have a certain hidden meaning. I do not measure and judge of it by my own reason, but follow the faith, and consider it above my intellect. I do not reject what I do not comprehend, but admire it the more, because I do not understand it."[16] "After this," continues Eusebius, "he examines the whole work, shews that, according to the common use of language, it is impossible to understand it (αδυνατον αυτην κατα την προχειρον νοεισθαι διανοιαν,) and then adds,—After having ended what is called the prophecy, the prophet pronounces those blessed who keep it, and also himself—'Blessed is he, who keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book; and I John, who saw and heard these things.' That he therefore was called John, and that this book came from a certain John, I will not deny; I even confess that it was writtenby some holy man, and by divine inspiration, αγιε ειναι τινος και θεοπνευστ συγκινω. Nevertheless I cannot easily acknowledge, that this John was the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, whose name is affixed to the Gospel and Catholic Epistle. For I conclude[17] from the design and style of the different works, and from what is called the arrangement of the book (εκ της τε βιβλιε δ εξαλωγης λεγομενης,) that they were not from one and the same person. For the evangelist never introduces his name, or makes himself known either in the gospel or in the epistle." In the sequel (adds Eusebius) he proceeds in this manner, "Saint John no where speaks of himself, either directly, or as of a third person. On the contrary, the author of the Apocalypse places his name at the very beginning, 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.' In the epistle at the commencement of this book, he begins, 'John to the seven churches which are in Asia; grace be unto you and peace.' But the evangelist has not prefixed his name to the Catholic epistle; on the contrary, he begins without circumlocution, concerning the mystery of the divine revelation, 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes,' &c. And for the like revelation the Lord pronounced Peter blessed; saying, 'Blessed art thou Simon, Son of Jonas, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven.' Nor in the second or third epistles attributed to him, though indeed they are short epistles, is the name of John prefixed, but only the title of the elder. But this other man (the author of the Apocalypse) was not contented with naming himself once, but repeats it often 'I John,' &c; and at the end he says, 'Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book; and I John, who saw these things and heard them.' Therefore that a person named John was the author of this book ought to be credited. But who he was is uncertain; for he neither says, agreeably to the language of the Gospel, that he is the disciple whom the Lord loved, nor he who leaned on his breast, nor the brother of James, nor he who had himself seen and heard the Lord; whereas he would have introduced some expressions of this kind, if he had intended that we should know who was the writer. But this is not the case. Now many writers called John, I believe, have existed. Also it is probable from the sentiments and words, and their construction, that this man (the author of the Apocalypse) was a different person from him (the apostle.) For the Gospel and Epistle have a certain similarity; they begin in the same manner; the former says, 'In the beginning was the Word;' and the latter, 'That which was from the beginning;' the former says, 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, a glory as of the only begotten of the Father;' and the latter the very same, with this trifling variation, 'Which we have heard, which we have seen, and our hands have handled of the Word of life.' Again, we find in both much of life, light, avoiding of darkness, truth, grace, joy, the flesh and the blood of the Lord; judgment, forgiveness of sins, the love of God towards us, the command of love one towards another; the necessity of keeping all the commandments; the judgment of the world, of the devil, of antichrist; the promise of the Holy Ghost; the adoption of God; unlimited faith; the Father and the Son. But the style of the Apocalypse is very different from this, it is dissimilar in almost every point.

[15] Dionysius appeals here, 1st, to the testimony of some of the ancients, τινες των προ ημων; and 2dly, to that of many of his cotemporaries; "many of them," says he, "highly esteem it"—consequently, not all. It is difficult therefore to say, with Dr Storr, (*New Apology for the Revelation of Saint John*, p. 50, of the original,) that Dionysius only disputes and conjectures, but does not appeal to historical arguments.

[16] The various turns which the author here takes; the indeterminate, obscure assertions which he makes; and the express appeal to the brethren, who highly esteem the Apocalypse; shew, as it appears to me, clearly that in this place he delivers, from tenderness to those of different sentiments, not his whole opinion. "On the contents of the book he neither could nor would decide, since he understood nothing of it:" this, I believe, is the sense of this prolix passage. What immediately follows will hardly permit us to entertain a doubt on the subject.

[17] These internal reasons determine the decision of Dionysius, the former opinions and evidences of antiquity having left him in doubt. The τεκμαιρομαι εκ, κ. τ. λ., do not entirely exclude historical reasons also.

Farther, the Apocalypse neither mentions the Epistle, nor the Epistle the Apocalypse.—The language alse of the Gospel and Epistle is very different from that of the Apocalypse. For the Greek of the former is not only void of grammatical errors, but there is an elegance in the expressions, the argument, and contexture of the discourse; and we do not discover either a barbarism, a solecism, or even an idiomatical expression. As to the other, he who saw the Apocalypse, may perhaps have received wisdom and prophecy; but the language is not good Greek, it is mixed with barbarisms and sometimes with solecisms. These I will not at present quote, as it is not my intention to ridicule, but to shew the dissimilarity of the writings."[18] Here, then, we have most important information concerning the Apocalypse. A scholar of high antiquity, who lived somewhat more than a hundred years after the apostle Saint John, and was then in high estimation for his knowledge and character; who has been in repute with all antiquity, and continues from the very fragments of his writings to obtain the respect of posterity,—this conscientious and learned inquirer was induced to doubt, by the "testimony of some of the ancients," who considered this book not only as not apostolical, but even as worthless and erroneous. Notwithstanding, he would not absolutely reject it, since many of his contemporaries continued to esteem it: on the contrary, he confessed that it was a holy book, and inspired by God. He acknowledged this more from respect to the supporters of the Apocalypse, than from his own conviction; for its contents were to him obscure and incomprehensible. But thus much he asserted with confidence, that it was not written by the apostle Saint John, but by some other person of the same name; for the style and contents of the book prove it incontrovertibly.

The father of Christian ecclesiastical history represents the opinion of antiquity concerning the Apocalypse exactly in a similar manner, but more determinately and clearly.[19] "Of the Revelation," says he,[20] "the majority are even yet" (after all the inquiries that had been then made) "still in doubt;" that is, they reserved to themselves all decisive opinion on it, since they knew not whether they should consider the book as genuine or spurious. "Therefore," says he,[21] "he who chooses, may place the Apocalypse among the ὁμολογουμένα," (the universally acknowledged.) For at that time the book had many zealous supporters,[22] who asserted its authenticity to be incontrovertible. Eusebius would not deprive those persons of their opinion, but nevertheless reminds them, that it was contradictory to history, for some of the ancients had actually pronounced it spurious, (ετι τε η Ιωαννυ αποκαλυψις, ει φανειη, ην τινες ως εΦην αθετησιν, ετεροι δε εγκρινουσι τοις ὁμολογουμενοις.)

Such are the evidences against the authenticity of this book, with which its divinity is inseparably connected.[23] On the other side, it is supported by men of equal consequence. Justin Martyr, in the passage quoted above,[24] to prove the doctrine of a millennium, appeals to the Revelation of Saint John the apostle. Irenæus, who lived so near the time of the apostles, and was also the scholar of Polycarp, who had heard Saint John himself,[25] not only proves,[26] the approaching destruction of the Roman monarchy, the wickedness of antichrist, and the doctrine of a millennium, from the Apocalypse, but also expressly asserts, that it was written almost in his (Irenæus's) own time, by Saint John the apostle; and appeals to manuscripts of this book, which were ancient and might be relied on, and which he had seen.[27] Theophilus of Antioch,[28] in one of his works now lost, had refuted erroneous doctrines by authorities from the Revelation of Saint John; consequently, he thought it of divine inspiration. Clement of Alexandria[29] likewise places it among the genuine and divine Scriptures. Tertullian,[30] in proof of its divinity, appeals to the evidence of the communities established by the apostles themselves. And an authority of the greatest weight, Origen,[31] the most learned of all the Christian teachers, who had scrutinized the New Testament on true principles of criticism, and who was an enemy to the doctrine of a millennium, he places the Revelation more than once among the writings of Saint John the apostle, and among the divine books of the New Testament.[32] Jerome, the most learned of the Latin Fathers, is of the same opinion. He states[33] that in his time, the

[18] This criticism of the language is somewhat overstrained. Neither is that of the Gospel and Epistle so pure, nor that of the Apocalypse so corrupt, as Dionysius has here represented it.

[19] *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 24, 25, and 30.

[20] Ibid. iii. 24, p. 118, Reading. [21] Ibid. iii. 25, p. 119.

[22] See above, p. 32.

[23] One of the most moderate and impartial opponents of the authenticity of the Revelation of Saint John is Michaelis, in his *Introduction to the New Testament.* See the very learned and very accurate Mr Marsh's trans. vol. iv. p. 461.

[24] See above, p. 23. [25] Ibid. p. 24.

[26] *Advers. Hæres.* v. 26—end.

[27] We cannot place Melito among the evidences, for we only know that he had written a book on the Revelation of John. (See above, p. 29.) But what the tenor of this book was, whether he held this John to be the apostle, or some indifferent person, or whether he received or rejected the book, we know not.

[28] See above, p. 30. [29] Ibid. p. 27.

[30] Ibid. p. 28. [31] Ibid. p. 32.

[32] He appears to assert even, that not a single one of the ancients had doubted its genuineness. See above, p. 33, note [7]. But among the ancients, and especially among the fathers, we must not expect perfect logical precision; consequently, we must not take the expression of Origen in its strict sense. If this were actually his meaning, he was without doubt in an error, as is proved by the information of Dionysius and Eusebius.

[33] *Ep. ad Dardanum.*

latter part of the fourth century, the Greek church rejected indeed this book, which was received by the Latin; but that he nevertheless esteemed it divine, because he relied rather on the credit of antiquity than on the custom of the times. Now as the Romish church even then (and still more since the sixth century) had begun to be considered the oracle of Christians, from that time therefore until the Reformation, the divinity of the Apocalypse has scarcely ever been farther called in question." [34]

SECT. V. — THE TRUE VALUE AND CREDIT OF THE BOOK.

The foregoing observations on its contents and history, lead us to the following decision on the book of Revelation. It is undoubtedly very old; it was known as early as the beginning of the second century after Christ. But, it may be asked, what led so many and creditable men to receive it as an apostolical and divine Scripture? To this it may be answered, that its author was called John; and this, as appears probable, was the cause of its having been placed by these men among the divine Scriptures of the New Testament; they mistook him for the apostle of the same name. Who he was, and where he lived, we know not: but the contents of the book clearly evince that he was a Christian teacher and a pious man. It contains also many passages distinguished both for matter and composition; it has always been, and will always continue to be read by many with real advantage, as an excitement to virtue, and as affording means of consolation. But as we neither understand its contents, nor can depend with certainty on the present text as genuine, the use of it is only so far safe, as its contents agree with the other writings of the New Testament. Whether, lastly, the book was written by the apostle Saint John, or even by any apostle, cannot be positively either asserted or denied.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE ABOVE MENTIONED TESTIMONIES.

After having heard so many clear and weighty testimonies of antiquity, how is it possible for any intelligent and impartial man to assert, "that the present Scriptures of the New Testament were not declared to be genuine and divine before the Council of Laodicea, which was held about the year 364?" The enemies of Christianity — for these only make the assertion — would consequently wish to insinuate to the world, that before the fourth century Christians were entirely divided in their opinions, concerning the genuine Scriptures of the apostles and evangelists, and that at one time more, at another, fewer, books were received under this title, until at length the decisive sentence of the Council of Laodicea established the present canon. The author of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique Portatif* has lately brought this story again into notice. But if our adversaries would cast only a slight glance over the writings of the above mentioned teachers of the first two centuries and a half, they would undoubtedly blush at their own ignorance and boldness. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, prove their tenets by authorities taken from these Scriptures; and indeed from these only, rejecting all others as either forged, or merely human compositions. Many teachers of the first and second centuries mention a collection of the evangelical and apostolical writings as already existing. All the ancient writers whom Eusebius has cited, pronounce either unanimously or with a great majority of voices, these writings, and only these, to have been genuine works of the evangelists and apostles. Notwithstanding these circumstances, it is pretended that the first centuries were quite undecided and uncertain on this subject! Notwithstanding these circumstances, it is asserted, that the Council of Laodicea first established our present canon! [1]

All the Scriptures of our New Testament, it is confessed, have not been received with universal consent as genuine works of the evangelists and apostles.[2] But that man must have predetermined to oppose the most palpable truths, and must reject all history, who will not confess, that the greater part of the New Testament has been universally received as authentic, and that the remaining books have been acknowledged as such by the majority of the ancients; and, therefore, that all our present books of the New Testament (the Apocalypse perhaps excepted) have stronger proofs for their authenticity, than can be produced for any of the other writings of antiquity, for those of Xenophon, Polybius, Tacitus, or Cicero, which, nevertheless, are received as genuine with such confidence, that the whole world pronounced Hardouin insane, when he attempted to call

[34] See Lardner's *Supplement*, vol. iii. pp. 356–364, of the first edition. As well in respect of learning, as also of impartiality, the late Chancellor Reuss of Tubingen, and his son-in-law, Dr Storr, are among the most considerable defenders of the Apocalypse, — the former, in his *Defence of the Revelation of Saint John, in Answer to the Objections of Dr Semler*, 1772, 8vo.; and the latter, in the *New Apology for the Revelation of Saint John*, Tubingen, 1783, in 8vo. The history of the modern controversies on this subject may be seen in Walch's *Latest History of Religion*, Part vii. p. 257, and following pages of the original.

[1] This canon of the council is moreover spurious. See Prof. Spittler on this subject.

[2] See above, p. 34.

their authenticity in question. For, in the present case, we have not merely a single solitary witness or two, but a great variety. They name these scriptures not simply in a casual way, but relate their history, and make long extracts from them. These witnesses are men, who were intimately acquainted either with the evangelists and apostles themselves, or their immediate disciples; and lived, at farthest, not later than about two generations after their times. They were very well versed in every kind of profane literature; they were philosophers and scholars, who had formed their taste, and sharpened their judgment by the study of the best writers of antiquity, of Homer, Euripides, Æschylus, Plato, and Aristotle; they were scholars, who had read with attention all the works of the Christian authors; who were also familiar with the apocryphal writings, (of which, in the first century, existed but few,[3]) and after accurate scrutiny, rejected them. They also doubted of the truth of some of the books of our New Testament, and thereby established an evident proof that they were by no means credulous. Some of them travelled in person purposely to examine into the truth of the books, which made pretensions to divine inspiration, received accurate information on this point from the communities planted by the apostles themselves, and in their controversies with the heretics appealed to them with confidence.[4]

[3] Even here the enemies of Christianity betray themselves. They confound all together, and mistake writings forged in much later times for works which were in circulation soon after the times of the apostles under their names. Out of a single book, with different titles, they make many books. And through these effects of ignorance or dishonesty, the number of apocryphal works is magnified in such an amazing degree, that John Tolland, in his *Amyntor*, has filled many pages only with the bare names of them. This error has been most amply refuted by Mr Jeremiah Jones, in his *New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, London, 1726, 3 vols. 8vo., in which he goes through each of these apocryphal works separately, and proves that the ancients rejected them as spurious, and pronounced the Scriptures of our New Testament exclusively to be the genuine works of the evangelists and apostles. And this is also testified by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. 25) from his own knowledge of the earliest writings. The major part of these apocryphal works were written in the fourth century. They all agree in essential matters with our New Testament, but they contain also a variety of fables. See these writings in Jo. Alb. Fabricii *Cod. Apocr. N. T.* vol. iii. in 8vo.; Comp. Beausobre *Hist. du Manichée*, vol. ii.; and Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* part ii. vol. xii. pp. 157—174, first edition.

[4] Lardner deserves the greatest credit for his labours on the proof of the authenticity of the New Testament. In the second part of his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, (which was originally published in 12 vols. 8vo.) and in the *Supplement*, (in 3 vols.) he has collected the evidences of the Christian authors in a chronological order according to the centuries.

BOOK III.

THE UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOOKS EXTANT AT PRESENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, ARE THE SAME WRITINGS WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY COMPOSED BY THE AUTHORS WHOSE NAMES THEY BEAR.

But, it may perhaps be said, have not those books been long ago destroyed? Are not these which we have at present in the New Testament some of the writings which, in the early ages of Christianity, were falsely ascribed to the immediate disciples of Jesus? Or, how can we be assured, whether they are not so changed by latter interpolations and erasures, as to have become entirely different from the originals? It is therefore necessary to shew, that these writings have descended to us unaltered, or, in other words, the uncorrupted preservation of our present New Testament. And this I shall prove,

I. *From their Contents.*

As early as the two first centuries of the Christian era, we find the very same facts, and the very same doctrines, universally received by the Christians, which we, of the present day, believe on the credit of the New Testament. That Jesus was born under the Roman Emperor Augustus, and taught in the Jewish territory; that he publicly performed many and great miracles; was persecuted by his enemies the Jews, though innocent, even to death on the cross; and arose alive from the grave on the third day after his death; that a belief in this Jesus and his doctrine is the only way to salvation for all those to whom they have been promulgated; that this same Jesus has published and ordained for his disciples the wisest and most salutary precepts in respect of our conduct towards God, towards ourselves, and towards our neighbour; that hereafter he will descend gloriously from heaven, into which he visibly ascended, in order to awaken the dead, and to judge the whole race of mankind: all this is asserted in all the earliest writings of Christian antiquity[1] to have been the universal belief of Christians.[2] And all this

[1] See above, part I. book ii. chap. 1—3.

[2] It is only necessary to read, for instance, the 19th and 20th chapters of Irenæus's fifth book, *Adversus Hæreses*, where he gives a short sketch of the Christian doctrine as it then existed. The principal writings on this subject are, Dionysii *Petravii Dogmata Theologica*; Jacob Basnage *Histoire de l'Elise*; Lardner *L. cit.*; and Dr Semler's *Collections from the Writings of*

likewise is contained in those books which we now possess under the names of the Evangelists and Apostles.

II. *Because an universal corruption of these writings was impossible; nor can the least vestige of such a corruption be found in history.*

That these books should be universally corrupted was totally impossible, from the very state of Christianity. The Christian religion, even in the first century, was spread through every part of the known world. From the persecutions which then took place, the distinct communities existing at Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and in many other considerable cities, had little or no external connection with each other. As early as the first century arose heretics, whose tenets were refuted by the orthodox in their writings. Christians, even of no rank or consequence, were in possession of many copies of these books, which were reverenced and read with the greatest attention.[3] During the two first centuries no secret was made of any one relation or doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. On the contrary, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenæus, appeal to the facility which every one enjoyed of reading their Scriptures; and what has been termed the *disciplina arcani*, which attempted an occasional suppression of different histories or doctrines, is a custom of later times, and crept into Christianity with Pseudo-Platonism.[4] And at a very early period many translations of them were made into the Syriac and Latin languages. Now it must have been almost a miracle, if, notwithstanding the great variety of copies and translations of the originals spread abroad among distinct communities existing in no external connection with each other; notwithstanding these writings were held in profound reverence, and diligently studied; notwithstanding the opposite vigilance of heretics and orthodox; if, I say, the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists have been falsified in all the copies of the originals, and of the various translations, without the opposition of any one community, or of any single teacher.

In the beginning, it is true, the orthodox and heretics reciprocally accused each other of having falsified the Holy Scriptures. But even these very accusations evince the great attention with which the Christians watched over the purity of their sacred books, and the absolute impossibility of their universal corruption. An unknown author, noticed by Eusebius,[5] accuses the followers of Artemon with having introduced their heterodox system into the Divine Scriptures. In support of his assertion, he appeals to their own copies, and asserts, that they were not only different from the copies of the orthodox, but also perfectly at variance with each other; and reproaches them with being unable to support these alterations by the authority of any ancient manuscripts. It is by no means certain, that these heretics had really introduced those suppositious alterations into their copies of the New Testament; since the accuser seems to mean nothing more than the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which is called the Septuagint; produces no proofs of any such corruptions; and, in short, speaks in a tone too declamatory, to be received on this subject as an accurate relater.[6] But should we grant, that the accusations against Artemon and his followers were justly preferred, yet even these prove, that in the earliest ages of Christianity it was impossible for any one to attempt a corruption of the evangelical and apostolical writings, without meeting public opposition, and without being openly branded for a deceiver. That we may perceive how much such an alteration of the Sacred Scriptures was abhorred, I will quote the same author's sentiments on the subject. "What a daring crime this is, (that is, the corruption of the sacred books,) possibly they themselves (the followers of Artemon) are not ignorant; for they must either not believe the divine Scriptures to have been inspired by the Holy Ghost, or else they must imagine themselves wiser than the Holy Ghost: on the first supposition they are infidels; on the second they are out of their senses." The heretics retaliated, and accused the orthodox of a similar offence. The Manicheans pretended, that the books of the New Testament were not written by the evangelists and apostles, but were falsely attributed to them in later times, or were at least violently mutilated and corrupted by the Christians.[7] But the Manicheans adopted this pretence, because the Scriptures of the New Testament are evidently contradictory to their erroneous tenets concerning the Old Testament, the human nature of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and two eternal principles.[8] They have themselves refuted their own assertion, by quoting as genuine those passages of the New Testament which treat of the discourses and miracles of Jesus, without any other proof than those by which we prove the

the old teachers, which he has prefixed to Baumgarten's *Dogmatic and Polemic*.

[3] See Walch *On the Use of the Holy Scripture among the ancient Christians*. Leipzig, 1779, in 8vo.

[4] See above, p. 22.

[5] *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. 28, pp. 253—255.

[6] See Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. iii. pp. 43—48, 1st edit.

[7] Faustus, one of the most learned among the Manicheans, had brought forward this accusation with the greatest show of probability, in the work which was refuted by Augustine; lib. xxxii. cap. 2, lib. xxxiii. cap. 3, in Augustini Opera, vol. viii. p. 320, et pp. 329, 330, edit. Benedictin.

[8] See the passages from Faustus quoted above.

authenticity of the whole.[9] Nor have they offered any historical argument as a proof of their assertion. "There are absurdities in the writings of the New Testament. The evangelists contradict themselves. The author of the gospel attributed to Saint Matthew, speaks of Matthew in the third person."[10] This was the whole proof which the learned Faustus could advance in support of his supposition. Arguments, which in part are visibly false; and which, even if they were true, could determine nothing in an historical discussion, where every thing depends on the attestation of credible witnesses. In order to have established his assertion, Faustus ought to have demonstrated, that all the old writers and manuscripts which we produce as evidences for the authenticity of the New Testament, prove nothing. He ought to have quoted opposite evidences and manuscripts, different from those which existed among the Christians. He ought to have shewn from history, when and where these corruptions were made. Had the doctrines of Christianity been really uncertain, this learned writer, who lived in the latter part of the fourth century, might without much trouble have produced these proofs. But on all these subjects he is perfectly silent; and every thing which he is able to produce, consists entirely in self-formed conclusions and charges, which are as groundless as the principal accusation. His adversary, Augustine, challenges him to produce this proof, and appeals with perfect confidence to the unanimous testimony of all the teachers, and manuscripts of antiquity. "What writings," says he,[11] "can you receive as genuine, if you reject those of the evangelists and apostles? We are convinced of the genuineness of the apostolical writings in the same manner, as we know that the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, or Varro, were derived from those whose names they bear. Who can be so absurd as to reject our Scriptures, for whose genuineness, from the time of the apostles, the Church has deposed such numerous and concordant testimonies?" This very accusation, therefore, of itself, proves that the arguments for the authenticity of the evangelical and apostolical writings are incontrovertible.

III.—*From the Agreement of all the Manuscripts.*

The manuscripts of the Scriptures of the New Testament, which are still extant, are far more numerous than those of any other book in the world. Above two hundred and fifty have been already collated by critics in their different editions. Of these, it is true, all do not contain the whole of the New Testament: the greater part have only the Gospels; others contain also the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles; and a very small number the Revelation of Saint John.[1] All these manuscripts, which were written in very different parts of the world, and of which some are above twelve hundred years old, give us the books of the New Testament in all essential matters perfectly accordant with each other, as any one may easily convince himself by examining the editions published by Mill, Küster, Bengel, Wetstein, or Griesbach. The thirty thousand various readings, which are said to be found even in the manuscripts collated by Mill, consist almost entirely in nothing but palpable errors in transcription, or trifling grammatical and verbal differences, which by no means make any alteration in the sense of the subject.[2] Some, indeed, change the sense, yet only in passages which relate unimportant historical and geographical circumstances, or other collateral matters.[3] And the few which make any alteration in things of consequence, do not on that account place us in absolute uncertainty. For either we can discover the true reading by collating the other manuscripts, versions, and quotations found in the works of the ancients;[4] or, should this not be the case, yet we can even then explain with certainty the doctrine from other passages of the sacred books.[5] These numerous variations, therefore, are the most convincing proof, that the Holy Scriptures have not been altered in any point of doctrine or morality, or other matter of importance; because they are found perfectly concordant in all manuscripts of the originals and of the versions, which have been written and composed in Europe, Asia, and Africa. So far, therefore, from being hostile to the uncorrupted preservation of the books of our New Testament, (as some enemies of Christianity have asserted from ignorance or wicked

[9] Loc. cit.

[10] Loc. cit.

[11] Contra Faustum, lib. xxxiii. cap. 6, pp. 330, 331, edit. Benedictin.

[1] Besides these, a great number are preserved in the libraries of Germany, Italy, and other countries, which have not yet been consulted. The most perfect and accurate information concerning the MSS. which have been used in editions of the Greek Test. is to be found in the Prolegomena to Mill's and Küster's edition of the N. T. in the Prolegomena to Wetstein's N. T. and in Michaelis' *Intr. to the N. T.* vol. iii. pp. 185—361, of the learned and accurate Mr Marsh's translation.

[2] As, Mark, iv. 32, instead of ὁτ-ν σπαρῃ, "when it is sown," ὁταν φυῃ, "when it is grown up;" chap. v. 9, αποκριθη λεγων, "he answered, saying," λεγει αυτῳ, "he says unto him;" or instead of εισελθοντες, ελθοντες; instead of ἐλλησιτας, ἑλληνας; instead of περοιτινων, περοιτινιν; instead of φαρισαιου, φαρισαιων; instead of εβαπτισα, εβαπτισθη.

[3] For instance, γαδαρηνων for γεργεσηνων; βηθβαβαρα for βηθανια; or, Luke, xxiv. 23, the addition, εφαγε, και τα υπολοιπα εδωκεν αυτοις; Acts of the Apostles, viii. 39, πνευμα ἁγιον επεσεν επι τον ευνουχον.

[4] As 1 Tim. iii. 16, where we find the different readings, Θεος ὁς, and ὁ.

[5] For instance, Acts of the Apostles, xx. 28, some MSS. instead of Θεω have Κυριω. Let us suppose that we could not here make out which is the true reading, yet the matter may be determined from many other passages.

motives, and as many Christians have likewise apprehended from groundless fear,) these variations afford us, on the contrary, an additional and most convincing proof, that they exist at present, in all essential matters, as they left the hands of their authors.

IV.—*From the agreement of the old versions and quotations found in the ecclesiastical fathers.*

After all, should any one entertain a doubt concerning the uncorrupted preservation of our books of the New Testament, it must perfectly vanish, if we consider the wonderful agreement of all the old versions, and of all the quotations and extracts found in the ecclesiastical fathers. There is still extant a Syriac translation of all the books of the New Testament, (the Second Epistle of Saint Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of Saint John, the Epistle of Saint Jude, and the Revelation of Saint John, alone excepted,) which in all probability, was made in the first century. In the same period existed in the Western Church Latin versions, of which considerable fragments still remain. The Latin translation of Jerome, (which is generally called the Vulgate,) the Coptic, different Arabic, the Ethiopic, Armenian, Persic, and Gothic versions, are indeed in part much more modern, and therefore not considered by critics on the New Testament as of equal consequence.[1] Yet they prove thus much, that in all communities of Christians, both in the East and West, the same writings have ever been regarded as genuine works of the evangelists and apostles, which we in the present day find still unaltered in our New Testament. If we add to these circumstances, that the ecclesiastical fathers of the first centuries have quoted almost every verse of the New Testament, and, in regard to essential points, exactly agreeably to our present text: also, that many of them (for instance, Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustin, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Œcumenius,) have left us commentaries either on all, or on individual books of the New Testament, of which the scriptural text exactly coincides with our printed copies,—we must without hesitation confess, that the books which are now extant in our editions of the New Testament are the uncorrupted writings of the evangelists and apostles.

The enemies of Christianity, notwithstanding, continually pretend that they have been corrupted! No one, indeed, who possesses the least knowledge of the principles of criticism, will readily assert, that the various readings are corruptions. But on this subject we meet with Collins, who appeals to an alteration of the Gospels, which, according to the information of the ecclesiastical history, is said to have taken place in the sixth century under the Emperor Anastasius. Victor, bishop of Tunis in Africa, relates in his *Chronicon*,[2] that the Emperor Anastasius, considering that the Gospels were written by illiterate men, ordered them to be improved at Constantinople. This Victor is the only evidence that can be brought forward for this event; for Isidore of Seville relates it merely on his authority. He lived in Africa; consequently far distant from the scene where the alteration is said to have taken place. All the other writers make not the least mention of this circumstance: which, without doubt, would have excited bitter and unanimous complaints against the Emperor, already an object of general hatred. Moreover, Victor offers not the shadow of a proof in support of his narration: he names no immediate witnesses on whose authority he relates the story. Now, from a relation so very incredible, Collins, in opposition to the unanimous assertions of so many and such credible witnesses, attempts to prove the corruption of the New Testament.[3] But, even if we should grant that this information, delivered by an African bishop, of an event which is said to have happened at Constantinople, is deserving of credit; yet the alteration would not have taken place in all the manuscripts which existed in the Eastern Church; for, according to his own information, it is said to have been made only in the manuscripts at Constantinople. And if it had been actually put in execution in all the Oriental manuscripts, yet the manuscripts of the Western Church, over which Anastasius had no authority, would have remained unaltered. Farther, if we should grant even this, yet it was impossible to alter all the manuscripts of all the versions. Had, therefore, such an alteration been actually undertaken, it could not have been universal; but there would still have remained either the manuscripts of the West, or at least the versions, from which we might have been enabled to restore the original text. Since, therefore, not only all the Oriental, and all the Western, manuscripts of the Greek Gospels perfectly coincide with each other; but also all the old translations, and all the citations and commentaries of the primitive ecclesiastical writers are in perfect harmony with them,—it is most evident, either that the relation of Victor is a mere fable, or that

[1] Michaelis has given very ample information concerning these versions in his *Intr. to the N. T.*

[2] Ad. A. 506. See Scaligeri Thesaurus temporum.

[3] In his "*Discourse of Free-thinking*," pp. 69—73. In order to prove that the Scriptures of the New Testament are perfectly uncertain, he introduces the following arguments: — 1. Because the Canon of the New Testament was not made until sixty years after the death of Christ. (But it could not have been formed earlier, for before that time all the Holy Scriptures had not been composed.) 2. From the thirty thousand different readings in Mill. And, 3. From the passage of Victor alluded to above.

such an alteration, should it even have been resolved on, was never actually put into execution.[4]

Had the enemies of Christianity studied the proofs of our holy religion with more diligence and impartial care, they would not, at least, have considered such palpable absurdities as objections to its truth. The objection of Collins has perhaps a semblance of reason. But when Chubb says,[5] "It is abundantly evident that the Bible has been corrupted in the dark ages of Popery by the clergy, in whose hands it at that time exclusively existed;" it is, in fact, to assert, that the Pope and his clergy had brought together all the manuscripts of the New Testament, and the almost innumerable manuscripts of the different versions, and all the works of the ecclesiastical fathers; and when, with wonderful sagacity, they had projected and carried into execution such an almost miraculous undertaking, that with inconceivable stupidity they altered not a single one of those passages which evidently contradict their erroneous tenets; for instance, concerning papal supremacy, the worship of saints, the mass, celibacy, monastic vows, purgatory, and indulgences.

PART II.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.

THE AUTHORS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT POSSESS IN A VERY HIGH DEGREE ALL THE REQUISITE QUALITIES OF CREDIBLE EVIDENCES.

If we now unite the propositions already proved; if we consider the great number of credible witnesses, who unanimously relate, that soon after the death of Jesus, four Gospels, and the same number of Epistles as still exist in the collection of the New Testament, were written by the apostles and disciples of Jesus; that these books, as we possess them at present, are the very same in all the translations and manuscripts of the original; and perfectly coincide with the quotations and commentaries of the primitive writers,—we must either reject the writings of Xenophon, Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus, for whose authenticity neither so many nor strong arguments can be found, and, in a word, all the ancient writings in the world, as not genuine,—or we must acknowledge, that the Scriptures of the New Testament are authentic, and in every matter of importance perfectly uncorrupted.

But from this alone we cannot determine their credibility. An author may write of events which happened in his time, and in the place of his residence, but should he be either credulous or a fanatic, or should we have reason to suspect his honesty, his evidence is of no value. In order, therefore, to establish the credibility of an author, we must examine more closely into his particular character, and inquire whether he possessed abilities sufficient to scrutinize the truth, and honesty enough faithfully to relate it as it happened.

Now the historical writers of the New Testament are distinguished also from all others whose credibility has never been called in question by any reasonable man, in this respect, that if historical subjects were capable of mathematical demonstration, we must acknowledge that their credibility has been not only morally proved, but even demonstrated mathematically.

SECT. I.—THEY WERE IMMEDIATE WITNESSES.

The writers of the New Testament lived at the time and in the place of the actual occurrence of the events which are the subject of their history. Saint Matthew, Saint John, Saint Peter, Saint James, and Saint Jude, were Jews by birth, and lived in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, at Jerusalem, the scene of the history which they relate. They were all, moreover, immediate disciples of Jesus, and the facts contained in their histories had been subject to the scrutiny of their own senses. It is true that Saint Paul was a native of Tarsus, and not among those who had been the friends of Jesus, and the eye-witnesses of his actions. Yet he had lived a long time at Jerusalem, had studied theology under Gamaliel, a Jewish scholar, at that time in the greatest repute, and diligently employed himself in acquiring a thorough knowledge of the Jewish religion. We have but few biographical memoirs extant of Saint Mark and Saint Luke: yet thus much do we know, that the former composed his history under the immediate inspection of Saint Peter,[1] and the latter his narration under the immediate in-

[4] See *Remarks upon a late Discourse of Free-thinking*, by Philoleutherus Lipsiensis, Cambridge, the sixth edition, 1725, in 8vo. Dr Richard Bentley, the author of this work, defends the authenticity of our New Testament, particularly against the objections which are drawn from the Various Readings, and from the above mentioned information of Victor, pp. 61—84. In all probability this story of Victor took its origin from his having misunderstood the account concerning Macedonius, patriarch of Constantinople. See loc. cit. p. 82.

[5] In his Posthumous Works, vol. i. pp. 65, 66, 118, 121, 122, &c.

[1] See the testimonies of Clement of Alexandria, Papias, and Tertullian, on this subject.

spection of Saint Paul.[2] Their histories must therefore be considered to possess the same authority as if they had been written by the eye-witnesses themselves, whom we have named above.[3]

SECT. II. — THEY WERE ALSO COMPETENT WITNESSES.

The writers of the New Testament had the most important reasons, and sufficient abilities, to examine into the truth or falsehood of their histories. They relate their memoirs, not for the purpose of delighting future ages, or of conveying information in the usual method of historical writings; but they build on them a system of religion, from which alone they expected their temporal and eternal welfare. "If Christ be not risen," says Saint Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 13—19,) "then is our doctrine and your faith false; then are we yet in our sins; then they who have died in the belief of the truth of our religion are perished for ever; then are we persecuted Christians of all men the most miserable." A history which they conceived to be so essential, the very foundation of all their hopes, and of all their faith, had been undoubtedly scrutinized, and proved by them with the most anxious care.

SECT. III. — THEY WERE BY NO MEANS CREDULOUS.

"But who," it is objected, "is unacquainted with the power of credulity and fanaticism? The innumerable multitude of fanatics of whom history gives us information, may have employed care and labour enough on the examination of their wonderful adventures; yet credulity and fanaticism had blinded their reason to that degree, that some of them have even fancied that they had a daily intercourse with the Deity, and were furnished with miraculous powers. No one, for instance, can deny, that Baron Swedenborg was a man of learning, penetration, and honesty; nevertheless this man, in other respects of sound judgment and worthy of credit, believed and asserted, for the space of more than forty years, that he had frequent visits from angels, was caught up into heaven, and there received a variety of new doctrines." Certainly this observation ought to render us extremely cautious in examining such histories, particularly those connected with a religious system. But this caution and severity of examination, when applied to the history of the New Testament, shew us so much the more evidently, that the writers of it possessed the most perfect capability of avoiding any errors, and of accurately examining the true ground of their narratives. The events which they relate are of such a nature, that the proof of their truth requires nothing more than sound organs of sense. The examples of the astonishing deceptions of fanatical people relate for the most part to opinions, seldom or never to historical subjects, or to matters of fact. And who does not perceive that these are widely different from each other? In a court of justice we can prove the truth of a fact by means of witnesses; but it has never been heard, that the truth of an opinion (for instance, the immateriality or immortality of the soul) was established by the deposition of evidences. A man may likewise be deceived from certain affections incomparably easier in the case of opinions, than in the case of facts. In the case of facts also there exists a great difference. The quaker, Jacob Maylor, in the time of Cromwell's protectorate, could easily imagine that he was transformed into the person of Christ, and made the Saviour of the world; or another fanatic may with equal ease persuade himself, that he enjoys visions of the Deity, and that he feels a particular inspiration of the Spirit. For, in order to ascertain the truth of facts which concern ourselves, and our internal sensations, we must presuppose the person endowed with a sound and well-cultivated judgment, and no common knowledge of the distinction between sensations and imaginations. But that a man, Jesus, taught at Jerusalem in the reign of Tiberius; that he revealed certain new and peculiar doctrines to his disciples; that in public places, and in the presence of many persons, he healed a variety of people who were lame, blind, and dumb, and also, under circumstances of the like publicity, gave life to the dead; that he died on the cross, was buried in the customary manner of the Jews, and on the third day came again alive to his friends; had intimate intercourse with them as before his death; and in the sight of many of these friends ascended gradually into the air, and at last vanished from their eyes,—such facts require, in order to prove their truth, and set them beyond the possibility of doubt, nothing more than that the witness's organs of sight and hearing be sound, and that he uses them like one awake.

To this must be added, that the apostles were by no means credulous. They might perhaps have possessed this passion, so prevalent among the Jews, in other respects, and have amused themselves with fables. But, in this matter,

[2] See the testimonies of Tertullian and Origen.

[3] The Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel by Saint Luke form but one book; for in the Acts of the Apostles, i. 1, the writer names his gospel "πρωτον λογον, — librum primum, — the first part;" he continues immediately from thence, where he had left off in the gospel; and has dedicated both to one man, namely, Theophilus. Consequently, whatever is said by the ancients concerning the History of Saint Luke, is to be understood not only of the Gospel, but also of the Acts of the Apostles.

they were certainly so far removed from it, that we have reason to think them rather incredulous and obstinate. Their Master had informed them beforehand, that after his passion and death he would arise from the dead: but scarcely had the Roman guard taken him into custody, before they all fled, resigned their flattering hopes, and absolutely denied that they had ever known him. Some women relate that they had found the grave empty, and had spoken with Jesus alive. Now, had the apostles been in the least degree credulous, they would not assuredly have had the least hesitation in believing it: but they ridiculed it as an idle tale. (Luke, xxiv. 1—11.) Saint Peter, nevertheless, instigated by curiosity, runs to the place, and finds the report perfectly true; the grave is open and empty; he wonders and departs. (Luke, xxiv. 12.) After some time Jesus comes into their assembly, where ten of the apostles are present: and now they can doubt no longer. But Saint Thomas, who was absent, thinks them all deceived, and will not believe before he has accurately inspected the body of this person, and discovered on it the marks of his crucifixion, and the wound in his side. (John, xx. 24, 25.) And how violently was Saint Paul prepossessed against the truth of this history? How active in discovering those who confessed it, and in procuring their death? (Acts, viii. ix.) Can we believe that such people were credulous, and suppose that they received their history as true on the first vague report without farther examination? Had Cromwell, in the presence of the Lords and Commons, asserted that he had seen the unfortunate King Charles a few weeks after his execution, first in Westminster Abbey, and afterwards many times in Saint James's Palace, and conversed with him frequently for several hours together; had the usurper, in consequence of this resigned the protectorate, and made preparations for bringing back the exiled Queen and family; we should have conceived, perhaps, that he had experienced an extraordinarily violent fit of fanaticism; but it would have occurred to no one to accuse him on this account of credulity; and to assert, that he had blindly received this relation as true only on the information of an old soldier, or a woman that was perfectly unknown to him.

SECT. IV.—NEITHER WERE THEY FANATICS.

Some may perhaps be inclined to adduce the above example against the truth of the Gospel history. The strangeness and wonderfulness of such a relation, it may be said, would have inclined every reasonable man to have conceived that the Protector was rather a fanatic than that his narration was true. This I shall hereafter examine. And here, where we are not treating of the miracles, but merely of the common and customary events, of the apostolical history, we must first examine this question, Whether the writers of the New Testament can reasonably be considered as fanatics; or whether we cannot discover evident traces, that they were not in the least infected with this dangerous poison of the human understanding? An inquiry which will conduct us into one of the most interesting and instructive parts of the history of the human understanding; and is absolutely essential for the conviction of Christians, on account of the frequent accusation of fanaticism which is made by the enemies of the New Testament. To examine this subject, therefore, more accurately, will amply repay our trouble.

I will, in the first place, endeavour to collect from history the different features in the character of this astonishing phenomenon, a fanatic; and then compare the picture with our scriptural writers.[1] A fanatic thinks himself always the chief favourite of Heaven. And truly a person in whom the Divinity immediately dwells, with whom he deigns daily to hold immediate converse, and makes a living oracle; such a person most assuredly has reason to believe, that he is extraordinarily favoured by God. This fanatical pride is often carried to such an extent in men, that they convince themselves God should do every thing which they desire; and if he does it not, think themselves offended, break out into acrimonious complaints against him, or uncharitable accusations of ungodliness in other men, which they fancy to be the cause of the disaffection of Heaven. Disorder and contradiction in their system, (if a collection of unconnected, problematical, and contradictory opinions can be called a system,) and obscurity and absurdity in their explication of it, form another feature in the fanatical character. Men, in whom the power of the senses is extended to a kind of madness, are not in a condition to employ the reasoning faculties of the understanding, which require internal tranquillity. And the constant tumult of their minds renders them incapable of speaking connectedly and rationally. Should they discourse of their inspiration, that obscurity becomes perfect nonsense. A

[1] Fanatic, fanaticus, ἐνθουσιαστής, φανταστικός, is one who acts only according to his sensations, and not according to the reflections of his reason. And this is the case, even when his sensations are true, agreeable to their objects; but still more so, when they are merely imaginary. A man may act fanatically in a variety of ways; for instance, if he be guided in his conduct by mere antipathies or sympathies, perform any thing only because he feels an internal excitement to it, imagine that he has seen angels, hears discourses from heaven, &c. But we must be very careful not to confound the fanatic with the sentimentalist, the man of feeling, (εὐθυσιαστής;) the latter is a praiseworthy quality, the former a blameable.

fanatic may be a person of great talents and rare prudence in the management of his temporal concerns. But this strength of mind is of no other use to him only to sink him deeper in the vortex of his fancies and follies. And this absurdity in his discourses, compared with the prudence in the management of his temporal concerns, forms one of the strongest contrasts that we can imagine. Fanatics are generally enemies, or at least contemners, of all written revelation, because it renders their own continual inspiration perfectly unnecessary. They distinguish it by the low and irreverent name of an obscure writing, which must be cleared up by internal light, and of a dead letter, which must be animated by the living spirit which exists in the soul. This is the cause of the complete indifference to all religion, which is commonly united with fanaticism. "Their mind," says a profoundly thinking historian, "which floats on the wide sea of inspiration, can be confined within no bounds; and therefore they permit to others also the same liberty." But however tolerant they may often be in religious matters, in their civil concerns they are equally cruel and barbarous. The supposition that they are immediately influenced by God in all their actions and undertakings, and that they think and act by his command, places them far above humanity, and blinds them to such a degree, that they exercise the most cruel tyranny, and shed in streams the blood of God's creatures and children, not only without any sensations of pity, but, on the contrary, with joy and triumph. That fanatics exhibit a wonderful firmness under sufferings and torments is known to every one, and has been frequently used by the enemies of Christianity, to detract from the firm heroic courage of the Christian martyrs. But the characteristic of fanatical firmness under torments, namely, that imprudent, inflexible obstinacy, and that insensible obduracy, which, in these cases, they constantly exhibit, has not been often remarked. If a person does not give himself the least trouble to represent to his tyrants, with modesty and gentleness the principles for the sake of which he is persecuted; but, on the contrary, answers those in authority over him either not at all, or with impertinence; if he reject all the methods which prudence would point out for avoiding his torments either wholly or in part, without violence to his principles, and if he rather solicit sufferings, who does not perceive that such a firmness under torments cannot proceed from a calm and rational reflection, and an heroic disregard of the world, but is the effect of a morose, unsocial obstinacy, and an inhuman obduracy; rather a paroxysm of frenzy than a praiseworthy firmness of mind? This paroxysm often increases to such a degree, that it produces even convulsive agitations of the body, and absolute madness; as we learn particularly from the early history of the Quakers. Such gloomy and morose persons, who consider the world with nausea and hatred, and have retired, as it were, back into themselves, in order to listen constantly to the suggestions of Heaven; who imagine that they are infinitely exalted above common humanity, and are the particular objects of the divine favour and care; such persons cannot certainly form a social, beneficent system of morality. Condemnation of all innocent indulgences; a solitary, selfish, gloomy, melancholy life; numerous fasts; rigid vows of celibacy; all possible avoidance of domestic and civil society; hostile hatred of the body and of the world; corporeal sufferings and mortifications; in short, a morose, unsocial, and barbarous severity, is the characteristic of a fanatic's system of morality.

It would conduct me too far from my purpose, were I to enter on a more ample development of this character. Whoever is acquainted with the history of the Montanists, of Mahomet, of the earliest Anabaptists, of Cromwell and his fanatical followers, of the Quakers and Jansenists, will be able to confirm the truth of each individual feature sketched above, by many examples from history.

From this picture of fanaticism cannot be selected a single, even the most trifling feature, which can be applied to the writers of the New Testament; on the contrary, they possessed traits diametrically opposite to every one of them. These men relate many great errors and faults which they had themselves fallen into: their strange ideas of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah; their inconstancy towards Jesus, whom they all deserted at his death; the rash and mad zeal with which Saint Paul persecuted the Christians; the reprehensible hypocrisy of Saint Peter. They make mean and humble descriptions of themselves; they attribute all their gifts and extraordinary endowments solely to the unmerited grace of God; they represent themselves as slaves, servants of the Christians, and as unworthy objects of the divine grace and beneficence, (1 Tim. i. 15, 16.) They speak, also, uniformly of themselves with equal reverence, modesty, and humility, (1 Cor. xv. 10; 2 Cor.) In their system exists the most perfect harmony. Saint Paul has never contradicted himself in his epistles, which he wrote at very different times, and addressed to very different communities and persons. The historians of Jesus have indeed some trifling discrepancies in the collateral circumstances of their narratives, (and this is an evident proof that they did not copy one from another;) but in essential matters they entirely and perfectly agree. And although scarcely one among them had read the writings of the

others,[2] yet their histories and doctrines are perfectly concordant. The system itself, even those parts of it which treat of their inspiration, (1 Cor. ii.) is exhibited with such method, connection, perspicuity, and good natural understanding, that the most simple can understand it in its essential parts, and comprehend the sense of the writers.[3] In their writings they shew the greatest veneration for the written revelation of the Old Testament. They exhort their disciples to study it diligently, (2 Tim. iii. 14—17;) they pronounce it a truly divine revelation, and a binding rule of belief and conduct, (2 Peter, i. 20, 21;) and they point out its friendly harmony with the Christian system.[4] They invariably insist on this truth, that no other religion than that which they preached, can procure men so great and lasting happiness, (Acts, iv. 12; Rom. iii. 20—26.) But they make always a distinction between guilty and innocent ignorance and error, (Rom. i. ii. &c.) And thus reject all religious indifference on the one hand, and on the other all intolerant and anathematizing principles. In their sentiments and actions we remark the most meek, charitable, and benevolent temper. They earnestly forbid men to accuse others of heterodoxy, or to pronounce them damned, (Rom. xiv. 3—23;) they anxiously exhort to obedience of human ordinances, and the commands of the heathen magistracy, (Rom. xiii. 1—7; 1 Peter, ii. 13—17;) they direct that prayers should be offered up even for Nero, (1 Tim. ii. 1—6;) and their whole system of morals is directly pointed to instil into their disciples an universal, constant, disinterested, and generous philanthropy, (Rom. xiii. 8—16; Gal. v. 13, 14.) "I conjure you by all the good things, which Jesus has procured us; by the enlivening comforts which accompany charity; by the intimate connection in which you stand with one another; that you fulfil my only joy, and be unanimous, charitable, of one mind; do nothing with strife, and vain-glory, but in humility let each esteem others higher than himself; and be anxious not only for your own advantage, but also for the advantage of others. For you must have sentiments such as were the sentiments of Jesus Christ; who joyfully and voluntarily yielded up all his pre-eminencies and divine majesty for the advantage of men," (Phil. ii. 1—11.) Is this the language of a fanatic? Read only the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, or the First Epistle of Saint John, and then say, whether such social and benevolent principles and sentiments could exist in the mind of a fanatic? Did ever a fanatic place philanthropy, that is, a philanthropy which consists in an universally extended, and universally active kindness, (1 Cor. xiii. 4—7,) above all his opinions, favourite doctrines, and especial gifts? or speak of it with such strong feelings and in such emphatic language? And this system of morals they not only enforced by words, but also by their example. They have never assumed a dominion over their disciples; never required what they directed in a commanding tone. Was it necessary for the welfare of Christianity to use severity? even this was marked with the characters of pity towards the transgressors, and of a paramount desire to increase the general good. And their whole life was a series of afflictions, tribulations, sufferings, and critical dangers, which they bore from a love to their fellow-creatures. Again, how infinitely different was their behaviour under sufferings, from the behaviour of a fanatic! They preached, indeed, their doctrines with ardent courage and undaunted firmness; but they no where courted sufferings. Are they persecuted in one city; they flee to another. Are they apprehended, and dragged before the seat of justice? they discover a profound reverence for the magistracy, return the desired answers to every question, declare the doctrines which they preached with becoming and modest boldness, refute the false accusations of their adversaries, and use every means, which prudence or foresight suggest, to conciliate their judges, and make them inclined towards them. And was all this ineffectual? could they not otherwise escape condemnation than by renouncing their religion; then, composed and courageous, with minds full of philanthropy and reconciliation, and pouring forth fervent prayers for the welfare of their enemies and executioners, they submitted to death. It is only such a serenity of mind, when the bitterness of affliction is felt, devoid of all obstinacy and contumacious disrespect for others, and suffering solely for the love of truth, that can be named heroic courage and firmness of mind. In their whole system of morals nothing is found of morose, gloomy

[2] Saint John, Saint Peter, and Saint Jude, are the only scriptural authors of whom it is probable that they had read the writings of the others before they composed their own works.

[3] Benson, in the Appendix to his Paraphrase of the Epistle to Philemon, in the first dissertation, "In which it is shewn that Saint Paul could neither be an impostor nor an enthusiast," has made some very excellent observations on the character of the apostle, which is so clearly expressed in the whole of the epistle,—how far he was removed from all ambition, pride, and selfishness; how compassionate towards human misery and weakness; how well acquainted with the modes of thinking and language of the polished world; how exempt from a solitary enthusiastic temper of mind. Read this epistle in the Paraphrase of Sir Richard Steele, in his Christian Hero. I could wish that some friend of the Christian religion would, with the same view, devote his attention to the consideration of the speeches of Saint Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, and unfold the connection, solidity, confidence, sublimity, and integrity, which are so very prominent in them. Such a work would be a convincing apology for the scriptural authors, in respect of their pretended fanaticism.

[4] Acts, ii. 14—36; xiii. 15—41; Rom. iv. 10, 19—21, &c.

severity. They pronounce mortifications and voluntary sufferings to be of no importance in the sight of God, (1 Cor. xiii. 3,) but rather folly and barbarous absurdity, (Ephes. v. 29; Colos. ii.) They know nothing of the monkish virtues of those who call themselves more modern Christians; of voluntary poverty, abstinence from matrimonial connections, avoidance of social societies, and rejection of temporal dignities and honours. They no where condemn the solicitation or possession of honours and wealth, or the enjoyment of the pleasures which this world affords: they only exhort Christians to use these goods of the earth with grateful hearts towards God, devoid of every unsocial act of impurity, cruelty, or excess, and for the welfare of mankind in general.[5] Can any maxims be conceived more suitable, more advantageous to the human race, than those which Saint Paul delivers? (1 Tim. vi. 17—19.) "Charge the rich of this world, that they be not proud; and that they place not their trust in perishable riches, but in the eternal God, who plentifully provides for our enjoyment of the goods of the earth. That they do good; be rich in good works; generous, and impart willingly; and thereby assure themselves of eternal life." And it is particularly worthy of remark, that they did not preach this most enlivening and comfortable system of morals, like Seneca or Plato, possessed of all the enjoyments of life, but under every species of tribulation and affliction.[6]

The writers of the New Testament are, therefore, far removed from the pride of thinking themselves the especial favourites of God; they produce, with method and perspicuity, a connected, harmonious system of religion; they are great advocates for written revelation; they insist on the necessity of their religion, and condemn, indeed, all spirit of persecution, but at the same time all religious indifference; the central point of their system of morals, and of their conduct, is philanthropy, embracing and promoting the happiness of all; they exhibit under afflictions and torments a truly heroic courage; they censure all melancholy and gloom, recommend the use and enjoyment of earthly pleasures, and direct them to the noblest aim, the good of human society. They are, consequently, diametrically opposite to Fanatics.[7]

SECT. V.—THEY WERE, ON THE CONTRARY, MEN OF INTEGRITY.

The writers of the New Testament have given strong proofs of their integrity. I have already remarked,[1] that the style of their writings, and the choice of the events which they relate, contain strong arguments for their honesty. But it may be necessary in this place to extend this examination somewhat farther. In the historical books written by Jewish and heathen contemporaries, who were not Christians, many events of the Gospel history are confirmed. I will not delay the reader by proving, that every thing which the writers of the New Testament casually relate of the Roman emperors, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius; of the kings and considerable persons among the Jews; of the magistracies and customs of the Romans, Greeks, and Jews; of the civil rights and constitutions of the Jewish states; of the religious systems and opinions which then existed among them—exactly coincides with the information of foreign historians on these subjects. Lardner has discussed this subject in the first part of his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, with extraordinary labour, accuracy, and solidity.[2] It is sufficient for my present purpose to select from the great mass of events which he has produced, some of the principal, which either belong to the history of Christianity itself, or are intimately connected with it.

Of the taxing, (more properly, enrolment απογραφη,) which, according to Saint Luke, (ii. 1—5,) compelled the parents of Jesus to leave Nazareth, their place of residence, and go to Bethlehem, we find, indeed, no mention in foreign writers.[3] But the speech of Gamaliel, which is given us in the Acts of the Apostles, (v. 34—39,) makes mention of an enrolment, (v. 37,) which happened at the time when Judas the Galilean excited a sedition among the Jews. And in Josephus[4] we find, that after the banishment of Archelaus, Judea was made a Roman province, and an enrolment was appointed by Cyrenius, then president of

[5] Rom. xiii. 1—6; xiv.; 1 Cor. vii. 17—24; and in the whole of the 8th chapter; x. 27—33; 1 Tim. iv. 1—5.

[6] 1 Tim. iv. 1—4; vi. 17—19. Compare with 2 Cor. iv. vi. xi.

[7] See Lyttelton's *Conversion and Apostleship of Saint Paul*, in which this is proved particularly in regard to that apostle.

[1] See above, p. 9.

[2] In the second volume (first edition) of the *Credibility of the G. H.*; or the facts occasionally mentioned in the N. T. confirmed by passages of ancient authors, who were contemporary with our Saviour or his apostles, or lived near their time.

[3] The information itself of the evangelist is of very doubtful interpretation. It is uncertain whether he speaks of a taxation of the whole Roman empire, or only of the whole Jewish territory, (for γη may signify either *world* or *country*.) And the words αυτη η απογραφη πρωτη εγενετο ηγεμονευοντος της Συριας Κυρηνιου, are translated by the commentators in three different ways,—1. This taxation was the first when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; 2. This taxation was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria; 3. This taxation was the first of those which were made by Cyrenius (afterwards) governor of Syria. Lardner has treated most amply of this matter, *Credibility of the G. H.* part I. vol. ii. pp. 1—188, 1st edit. But what he asserts, p. 70, is very improbable, that the administration of the oath to the Jews, which, according to the information of Josephus, (*Antiq.* xvii. cap. 2, § 6,) happened at the time of Herod, is the same event as the enrolment of Saint Luke: that this assertion is unfounded, is evidently seen by comparing together the two accounts.

[4] *Antiq.* xviii. cap. 1, § 1, pp. 869, 870.

Syria; on which occasion a certain Galilean, of the name of Judas, excited the people not to submit to this order.[5] Let us compare the speech of Gamaliel, in the Acts of the Apostles, "After this man," (namely, Theudas, v. 36,) "rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the enrolment, and drew away much people after him." How exact and true is this narration! Saint Matthew relates (ii. 1—16) an action of King Herod, which, in respect to cruelty, has scarcely a parallel in history. He commanded all the male children in Bethlehem and the neighbouring country, who were a year old and under, to be put to death; because he had been informed, that in that place was born one who was King of the Jews. This appears to us, who are accustomed to the finer feelings of Christianity, almost incredible. But let us compare the character of this prince, as drawn by Josephus, with the above mentioned fact, and we shall find that his action is perfectly agreeable to his ruling sentiments and mode of thinking, and no more than we should expect from a man of a similar character. Herod had no common understanding and talents; but was biassed by an unlimited and insatiable ambition. This ambition urged him on to do every thing, without distinction, whether it were vicious, or had the semblance of virtue, which tended to gratify his ruling passion. Hence arose in his character that heterogeneous mixture of affable behaviour, splendid expense, tenderness towards his friends, and specious undertakings on the one side,—suspicion, rapaciousness, implacability, irreligion, inhumanity, and tiger-like cruelty on the other. He was resolute and daring in his undertakings; mild, conversible, and agreeable in his external behaviour; generous in matters which tended to the advantage, delight, or splendour of the public; and in outward appearance willing to do good to all. Yet this same man opened for himself a path to the throne by the murder of Antigonus and Hyrcanus, the only remaining princes of the Maccabean family; the latter, who was his near relation, and had saved his life, he assassinated with his own hand, and of the former he procured the death by means of bribery. He complied with the idolatrous worship of the Romans, plundered his subjects, and was suspicious and jealous of his best friends. Aristobulus, the brother of his wife Mariamne, was murdered by his directions, only because the people at Jerusalem shewed some affection for his person. Mariamne herself suffered a public execution, which was soon followed by that of her mother Alexandra. He put to death, in cold blood, a great number of the most considerable persons among the Jews; and even his own promising sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, were strangled by his orders, because he suspected that they might strive to obtain the sovereign power.[6] But the most horrible of all was the last action with which he departed out of the world, and from which he wished to establish another monument to his memory, and immortalize his name. In his last illness he commanded all the principal people of the nation to assemble themselves at Jerusalem, where he then lay. At their arrival they were shut up in the Hippodrome, and the dying king gave his sister Salome and her husband Alexas the following order, "As soon as the breath is out of my body, let them all be put to death, that all Judea may be compelled to lament at my decease." "With tears in his eyes," says Josephus,[7] "he conjured them by their love for him, and by their fidelity to God, not to refuse him this last honour." In such a ravenous beast in human form it was one of the smallest crimes,[8] if, deaf to the voice of pity and humanity, and unaffected by the innocence of the children and the poignant grief of their disconsolate mothers, he inhumanly dragged them from the arms of their parents, and put them to death with the ferocity of a tiger.[9] Saint

[5] *De Bello Judaïco*, lib. vii. cap. 8, § 1, p. 422.

[6] Josephus, *Antiquit. Judaic.* lib. xiv. cap. 16, § 4, p. 737, edit. Haverkamp; xv. cap. 3, § 3, p. 745; cap. 6. § 2, p. 756; cap. 7. § 4—6, pp. 761—763; ibid. § 8, pp. 763, 764; xvi. cap. 11, § 6, p. 822. The last most painful illness with which Herod was afflicted, is pronounced by Josephus to have been a punishment of the just God for the crimes of the king, xvii. cap. 6, § 5, p. 845; and he concludes the account of his life with this painting,—αυτὸς ὡμὸς μὲν εἰς ἅπαντας ὁμοίως καὶ ὀργῆς μὲν ἥσσων, κερδῶν δὲ τῶ δικαίῳ, lib. xvii. cap. 8, § 1, p. 848. The Jewish ambassadors, who, after his death, requested the Emperor Augustus rather to make their country a Roman province, than to place it under the dominion of the Herodian family, affirmed, "that he had been a most cruel tyrant, and that the nation had suffered more through him alone, than it had during many preceding centuries." Jos. *De Bell. Jud.* xi. cap. 6, § 2, p. 156, Haverk.

[7] *Antiquit. Judaic.* lib. xvii. cap. 6, § 5, pp. 845, 846; *De Bello Jud.* lib. i. cap. 33, § 6, p. 141. A short time before the breath departed from his body, Antipater also, his eldest son, was put to death by his command, because, it being believed that the king his father was dead, he was about to take upon himself the succession. *Antiquit.* xvii. cap. 7, p. 847; and *De Bello Jud.* i. cap. 33, § 7, p. 141.

[8] The character of this miserable man, drawn by the hand of a master, is to be found in Sterne's Sermons.

[9] Although Josephus has not related this history, of which omission the cause is not difficult to be discovered, (see Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* part I. vol. ii. pp. 194—196, 1st edit.) yet the whole character which he ascribes to this Jewish king, is the most evident confirmation of the barbarous deed mentioned by the evangelist. Macrobius, a heathen writer of the fourth century, relates of Augustus, "Quum audisset inter pueros, quos in Syria Herodes Rex Judæorum intra bimatum jussit interfeci, filium quoque ejus occisum, ait, 'Melius est Herodis porcum esse quam filium.'" *Saturnal.* lib. ii. cap. 4. Now, although Macrobius is far too modern to be produced as a valid evidence in this matter, and his story is magnified with an erroneous circumstance, yet the cited passage serves to prove how universally notorious was the murder of the children in Bethlehem, which was committed by Herod's orders. Voltaire, either from ignorance and inconsiderateness, or from dishonesty, asserts, (*Diction. Philosoph.* article, *Christianisme*,) that fourteen thousand children must have lost their lives in this massacre. If this were true, the silence of Josephus would be truly a very important objection to the veracity of Saint Matthew's narra-

Matthew informs us, (chap. ii.) that Jesus had been in Egypt: and this is confirmed even by Celsus himself, who takes occasion from it to throw out the accusation, that he had there learned the arts of magic.[10] That Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea, is likewise related by Tacitus.[11] The account of John the Baptist, who was unjustly put to death by Herod Antipas the Tetrarch, (Matth. xiv. 1—12,) is found also in Josephus.[12] The coincidence is remarkable. The Jewish historian relates that Herod had married his brother Philip's wife: and this very circumstance is asserted by Saint Matthew to have been the cause of John's execution. Immediately after he informs us, that the Jews pronounced the overthrow which Herod had suffered, to have been a divine punishment for his having slain John, who was surnamed the Baptist. Κτεινει γαρ ταυτον Ηρωδης, αγαθον ανδρα και τους Ιουδαιους κελευοντα, αρετην επασκουντας και τη προς αλληλους δικαιοσυνη και προς τον Θεον ευσεβεια χρωμενους βαπτισμω συνιεναι. "For Herod had put to death this man; a pious person who exhorted the Jews to practise virtue, to shew fidelity to one another, and reverence towards God, and with such hearts to come to be baptized." In exact coincidence are described the doctrines and behaviour of John by the Evangelists.[13] Saint Luke cursorily relates, (Acts, xviii. 1, 2,) that the Emperor Claudius banished the Jews from Rome: and Suetonius gives us the same account,[14] "Judæos," says he, "impulsare Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit."[15] The person whom Saint Peter raised from the dead at Joppa, was named Tabitha or Dorcas, (Acts, ix. 36:) and it appears from Josephus, that this name (which seems to imply something tender) was actually at that time in common use.[16] According to Saint Luke's information, (Acts, xi. 28, 29,) a great dearth prevailed throughout all Judea,[17] in the reign of Claudius; Josephus speaks of the same, and describes it as so terrible, that a great multitude of persons died of hunger.[18] The tragical end of King Herod Agrippa,[19] is related by Saint Luke (Acts, xii. 20—23) and Josephus[20] with so much harmony, that, had the latter been a Christian, one would have certainly believed that he intended to write a commentary on that narrative. This haughty monarch put off the Tyrians and Sidonians, who solicited a peace with him, until a certain day.[21] "And upon a set day[22] Herod, arrayed in royal apparel,[23] sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a God, and not of a man!"[24] And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him,[25] because he gave not God the glory:[26] and he was eaten of worms,[27] and gave up the ghost."[28] Both historians relate the fact, as to the chief particulars, in the same manner. Saint Luke describes the pride of the king, as well as the nature of his illness, more circumstantially; and omits the superstitious addition of the owl,

tive; and with this view Voltaire makes the assertion, who always shews himself an inveterate enemy of revealed, and not rarely of natural religion also. But Bethlehem was a very small place; scarcely two thousand persons existed in it and in its dependent district. Now the male children alone were put to death; consequently in this massacre not more than fifty at most were slain. In the description of the life of such a tyrant, this was so trifling an act of cruelty, that it was but of small consequence in the history of his bloody government. See Büsching's *Harmony of the Evangelists*, i. 216, 217, of the original.

[10] See Origen's work against Celsus.

[11] *Annal.* lib. xv. cap. 44, p. 279, edit. Antwerp, 1607, fol. Nero put the guilt of the terrible fire at Rome, as Tacitus here relates, on the Christians. "Auctor nominis ejus," continues he, (namely, Christiani,) "Christus, qui Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat." The agreement of many more circumstances of this last suffering of Jesus with the accounts of foreign writers is shewn by Lardner in his *Credibility of the G. H.* part i. vol. i. p. 299 and following pages, 1st edit.

[12] *Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 5, § 1, 2, pp. 383, 384.

[13] Matth. iii. 1; ii. 5—10; Mark, i. 1—5; Luke, iii. 1—14.

[14] Vita Claudii.

[15] Comp. Lardner's *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, vol. i.

[16] See Ottii Animadversiones in Josephum, Oper. edit. Haverk. vol. ii. p. 313.

[17] Ολη οικουμενη is sometimes used in scriptural language for a particular country only. See Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* part i. vol. i. p. 521 and following pages, 1st edit.

[18] *Antiq.* xx. cap. 2, § 6, p. 960; coll. cap. 5, § 2, p. 965.

[19] This Herod was the son of Aristobulus, and grandson of Herod the Great. By the favour of the Emperors Caligula and Claudius he was raised to the royal dignity, and almost all the lands which his grandfather possessed were by degrees bestowed upon him. Josephus, *Antiq.* xviii. cap. 7, § 10, pp. 896, 897; xix. cap. 5, § 1, p. 943.

[20] *Antiq.* lib. xix. cap. 8, § 2, pp. 650, 651.

[21] Josephus has not mentioned this particular circumstance. But he informs us, that the termination of the king's life succeeded a festal day, which had been appointed in honour of the emperor. From this circumstance we may conceive why Herod put off the ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon to that express day, namely, that he might shew himself with so much greater pomp to the people.

[22] Josephus determines it more particularly. It was the second day of the festival which was celebrated at Cesarea in honour of the emperor.

[23] A robe embroidered with silver, from which rays of the sun reflected a dazzling splendour, which set all the spectators in astonishment. Josephus.

[24] His flatterers (says Josephus, who prolongs this shout to an improbable extent) named him *a god*, and entreated him to be propitious to them, saying, "Heretofore we have honoured you as a man, but now we acknowledge that you are exalted above mortal nature."

[25] Josephus has inserted here a superstitious story, that Herod perceived an owl sitting on a certain cord over his head, and consequently held it to be an unfortunate omen. The fact itself he thus relates; that immediately afterwards the king was seized with a violent illness, and carried to his palace.

[26] The very same cause is assigned by Josephus, namely, because Herod had not punished the blasphemous flattery of the people.

[27] Josephus has not described the illness so circumstantially. The king, says he, felt violent pains about the heart and in the bowels. Saint Luke determines the cause more scientifically. The pain in the bowels proceeded from worms, by which he was eaten.

[28] After he had been continually tormented during five days by dreadful pains in his bowels, he expired. Josephus.

which is related by Josephus. A proof, that Saint Luke surpasses in fidelity, accuracy, and judgment even this learned historian of the Jews. When Saint Paul, in an uproar which the Jews at Jerusalem excited against him, was taken prisoner, the Roman Chiliarch, according to Saint Luke's relation, demanded of him, "Art not thou that Egyptian, who a short time ago, madest an uproar and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand murderers?" (Acts, xxi. 38.) Josephus explains to us this history, which Saint Luke has mentioned only casually.[29] An Egyptian[30] pretended, during the government of Felix, (consequently at the time mentioned by Saint Luke,) that he was a prophet; led with him into the wilderness a multitude of thirty thousand men; and marched against Jerusalem, promising, that the walls of the city should fall down immediately at his command; but was attacked by Felix, and escaped with a small part of his army. Of this remarkable harmony with foreign historians I will produce only two farther examples, and these on account of their opposite characters. Saint Paul, according to the Acts of the Apostles, (xxiv. 24, 25,) in his speech before the governor Felix and his wife Drusilla, discourses on the virtues of justice and chastity, and on the judgment hereafter to be holden on men for the violation of them. It must appear surprising to a reflecting reader why the apostle did not here speak on the fundamental articles of Christianity, on the resurrection of Jesus, &c.; and what reason could have induced him to select the above mentioned virtues in particular for the subject of his discourse. Tacitus and Josephus clear up this difficulty, and explain the cause. According to their information, the character of Felix is infamous, on account of the extortions which he had committed in Judea, and of the scandalous commerce in which he lived with Drusilla, the wife of King Azizus, whom he seduced and married, while her husband was still alive.[31] With this character the narration of Saint Luke is perfectly concordant. Saint Paul speaks before Felix and Drusilla of the judgments of God on injustice and unchastity. What could have been more terrible to such an audience? Felix trembled at the discourse! Nevertheless he held several conferences with the apostle, because he harboured the mean design of extorting money from him, (ver. 26.) What else could be expected from a man who lived in the public exercise of such violent injustice and adulterous marriage? This history in a twofold manner confirms the credibility of the scriptural writers; it shews how little Saint Paul suppressed the truth even when his temporal interest seemed to require it; and how accurately Saint Luke's narratives harmonize with the accounts of foreign historians. How honourable, on the other hand, is the conduct which Saint Luke (Acts, xviii. 14—16) attributes to Gallio, the Roman proconsul in Achaia! What justice, impartiality, prudence, and mild disposition shine forth in his answer to the accusation of the Jews against Saint Paul! "If it concerned an unjust or wicked action, reason would demand that I should support you. But as the contest concerns words, names, and your law, it is your own business. I will be no judge in such matters." And this agrees exactly with the honourable picture of him which foreign writers have drawn.[32]

Such a perfect coincidence with foreign contemporary historians in such trifling events, and in circumstances which are related only cursorily, establishes not only the authenticity of these writings, but is also a palpable proof of the integrity and credibility of their authors. Not less remarkable are the characters of the Gospel history, whom we find numerous and very distinct. The writers are evidently devoid of every species of art; yet the persons whom they introduce act so naturally and consistently, that we feel they are characters drawn from life. Pilate is convinced that the political accusations against Jesus are perfectly groundless; he attempts repeatedly to acquit him; yet not only against his own conviction, but even against his inclination, suffers him to be scourged, and even crucified: and all from the dread of being accused to Cæsar by the Jews. What a striking portrait of an unprincipled courtier! — who, moreover, (as was the case of Pilate, according to Tacitus,) had been guilty of many exactions, and therefore found it necessary to cover one act of injustice and cruelty by another. Judas Iscariot commits a crime of the foulest nature, he betrays his master, benefactor, and friend, for the paltry sum of a few pieces of silver. Notwithstanding the conciliatory, mild, and amiable warning of his Lord, he remains fixed in his barbarous determination, puts himself at the head of the murderers, goes boldly into the presence of his friend, and uses the most tender mark of friendship as the signal of treachery. The language of his friend, which might have been thought sufficient to have melted the most frozen heart, "Judas, betrayest thou me with a kiss?" even this

[29] *De Bello Judaico*, lib. ii. cap. 13, § 5, pp. 177, 178; *Antiq.* lib xx. cap. 8, § 6, pp. 972, 973.

[30] Josephus also has no where given us the name of this impostor, but only spoken of him under the appellation of "the Egyptian."

[31] Tacitus *Historiarum*, lib. v. cap. 9, p. 428, edit. cit. Claudius .. Judæam provinciam equitibus Romanis aut libertis permisit, e quibus Antonius Felix, per omnem sævitiam ac libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit, Drusilla Cleopatræ et Antonii nepte in matrimonium accepta. The history of this Drusilla is related by Josephus more circumstantially. *Antiq.* lib. xx. cap. 7, § 1, 2, pp. 969, 970.

[32] Nemo mortalium uni tam dulcis est quam hic omnibus. Seneca, nat. quæst. l. 4. Tacitus *Annal.* lib. xv. extr. p. 290.

does not make him alter his resolution. His conduct, probably, as we are taught by the event, was influenced by a hope, that his Lord would find means to liberate himself by those miraculous powers, which he had seen him so often exhibit. And when this expectation proved false, he proceeds to the magistracy of the Jews, confesses his crime, declares the innocence of Jesus, returns the money, and hangs himself. A frightful scene! But how well does it harmonize with the character of a covetous wretch as Judas was, according to the evangelists, and of a man who had been for some years a constant eye-witness of the ministry and actions of Jesus! A person of the finest talents could scarcely contrive a deceit so consistently; it was certainly totally impossible to one whose mind was devoid of cultivation, and whose employment from infancy had been the business of a fisherman.

Saint Peter is involved in a crime almost similar. But the event is perfectly different. A look of his friend recalls him; and awakens the nobler sentiments of repentance, and confidence in the favour of his Lord. How accurately does this accord with the source of his crime, as given by the evangelist! He sinned not from an established and predominant evil inclination, but from temerity and inordinate passion. Among all the writers of the New Testament none use arguments drawn from the love of honour more copiously, no one warns against pride (1 Pet. v. 5, 6) more strongly, or exhorts more forcibly to heroic courage, than Saint Peter; this Peter, who is continually distinguished by the evangelists for resolution, heroic courage, and love of honour.

Saint John also at first deserts his Master, but soon returns, follows him into the palace of the high priest, accompanies him to the cross, remains there until he had expired, and takes upon himself the duties of a son towards the mother of his friend; and scarcely is the rumour heard that the grave is empty, but he is one of the first who hasten thither. We could expect no other conduct from a person who possessed a heart so tender, so sensible, and so truly affectionate towards Jesus, as is attributed to Saint John in the evangelical history.

Saint Thomas, after the resurrection of Jesus, behaves not less agreeably to his accustomed resolution, which degenerated almost to obstinacy. We see here the very same person who formerly, when all the others opposed Jesus' return to Judea, alone arose and encouraged his fellow-disciples, (John, xi. 16,) "Let us also go, that we may die with him.[33]

And, lastly, by what means were the apostles, unlettered fishermen, enabled to draw such a character as is the character of Jesus; since it has not a parallel either in the history of their own country, or of any other? Wherefore did they attribute, in particular, such mild, patient virtues to their Messiah, in whom the whole nation expected an enterprising and successful warrior?

Many farther proofs of integrity of the like kind may be found in their books. The writers of the New Testament discover the utmost abhorrence of the crime of deceit and dishonesty; and preach an integrity which does not allow men to utter even an indifferent untruth.[34] They deliver convincing proofs that they themselves possessed this virtue which they inculcate on others under the penalty of the divine wrath. They no where break out in their own praise; and when Saint Paul was under the necessity of relating his extraordinary endowments before the false apostles, with what timid modesty does he speak! (2 Corinth. xii.) They do not suppress even their own failings; they relate the astonishment and stupidity of the apostles at the discourses of Jesus, (Luke, xviii. 31—34;) the disgraceful infidelity which they manifested towards him under his sufferings, (Matth. xxvi. 56;) the denial of Saint Peter, (Matth. xxvi. 69—75;) his dissimulation at Antioch, (Gal. ii. 11—21;) the indiscreet and furious zeal of Saint Paul, (Acts, ix.; Rom. ix. 2.) They establish no separate sects. No one of them puts himself at the head of a party. On the contrary, they caution men most earnestly against all party spirit; and unanimously exhort them to receive and to reverence no other than the invisible Jesus as their only Head, their Teacher, and their Redeemer, (1 Cor. i. 10—16, &c.) They relate without disguise facts which evil-minded persons might easily pervert to the disadvantage of their history and doctrine; that, for instance, the disciples of Jesus could not heal a sick man, (Matth. xvii. 16;) that Jesus, during his passion, had endured violent sorrow and agony, (Matth. xxvi. 38, 39;) that he performed no miracles at Nazareth, (Mark, vi. 4, 5;) that on the day of Pentecost some of the spectators accused the apostles of drunkenness, (Acts, ii. 13;) that Paul and Barnabas quarrelled and separated, (Acts, xv. 39.) If their cause had been an imposture, they would indisputably have suppressed every thing of this nature. Again, the doctrines which they preached were directly hostile to the ruling taste of their times, and to the darling passions of all mankind: the overthrow of idolatrous worship; the abrogation of the Mosaic law; salvation through the mediation of one who had been crucified; the extirpation of all inordinate and extravagant appetites; a perfectly spotless

[33] See Secker's Sermons; and also Lardner on the internal marks of the credibility of the N. T. in the *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Nath. Lardner.* London, 1769.

[34] Rom. xii. 9; Ephes. iv. 25; 1 Peter, i. 22; ii. 21, 22.

and heroic courage. And the whole manner in which they exhibited their doctrines and history bears the visible stamp of the greatest honesty. Without any anxiety to prove the truth of their narratives; without any rhetorical arts to recommend them to others; without any artful and concealed obscurity, they mention their history as a matter which must be either known to all their contemporaries, or which could be examined and its truth or falsehood discovered without much trouble. The confidence and sure conviction with which they write is particularly apparent where they speak of the exercise of their miraculous powers. They relate these astonishing facts without any ornaments of language, oratorical flights, but with the most common expressions, and in the most concise and simple manner; when they speak of them, they bring to the remembrance of their contemporaries the artful religious deceits with which the heathen priests imposed on the people, and led them like irrational animals, (1 Cor. xii. 1, 2;) they appeal to these their supernatural gifts in opposition to those which they sharply reproved; and this, when addressing themselves to communities in which they had many personal enemies, (1 Cor. xii. xiv.; Gal. ii. 1—4.) In short, they speak with such certainty, with so much self-conviction, and with such confidence, of the truth of their history, that assuredly we can no longer confide in any historian whatever, if we entertain the least doubt concerning the honesty of the writers of the New Testament.

SECT. VI. — THEY RELATE EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED IN THEIR OWN TIMES.

The writers of the New Testament relate their history at a time when it was almost impossible to have forged it. They inform us not of events which happened at the other extremity of the world many ages ago; as that a person perfectly unknown to posterity had, many centuries before their times, performed wonderful things in Britain. No, on the contrary, at Jerusalem they relate events which they assert to have happened at Jerusalem; events which took place in the times, and, in part, before the eyes, of persons who were then alive, (Acts, ii. 22—24;) events which tended to injure, and reflect dishonour on the principal persons in the city. These events they relate not in obscure corners of the town, in the presence of one or two insignificant persons: but in public places, in the schools of the Jews, before the highest tribunal of the nation. In the courts of justice of the Jewish kings and Roman governors they relate, that Jesus, who in the presence of all the people, and of the chief and most learned men of their nation, had proved himself by miraculous actions to be the long expected Messiah, had given to the human race the most noble and salutary doctrines, and led a most holy, innocent, and beneficent life, had been persecuted with ferocious cruelty by the chiefs of the people, until they brought him to the cross; that this same Jesus, nevertheless, a few days after his death had arisen, and had been seen at Jerusalem by many persons. This the apostles avow freely, publicly, and in the presence of men who flourished at the time they assert their history to have happened. They are thrown into prison, laid in irons, scourged, some of them put to death, and the others threatened with a similar fate. But not a single person arises to shew the falsehood of their narrative. They not only relate this *viva voce*, but also publish it in writings, addressed to places where considerable Jewish communities then existed; and at a time when they universally opposed the spread of Christianity with the greatest violence. Four men publish accounts of these events at different times. None of the succeeding historians would certainly ever have ventured to have laid them again before the public, if the narrative of the preceding had already been acknowledged false. And this their history is the relation of public and very interesting events, of a tendency no less important than the reformation of the whole existing world. A man must not only be deceived, or a notorious impostor, to utter falsehoods under such circumstances, but absolutely insane. We must, therefore, pronounce the writers of the New Testament either to have been out of their senses; or grant, that they did not forge their narrative, but, as to themselves, were perfectly convinced of its truth.

SECT. VII. — THEY APPEAL TO NOTORIOUS PROOFS.

Had they not been convinced of the truth of what they relate, but impostors, they would by no means have appealed to such proofs as depend only on the organs of sense, and which might have been easily examined by any, even the most simple person. In order to prove the truth of their history and doctrine, they do not appeal, like Mahomet, to secret visions of spirits, nocturnal journeys to heaven, or things which, as he pretended, took place in secret. They appeal to miracles which they had performed in the presence of their auditors, and in the midst of large communities. "My preaching among you consisted not in the subtile discourses of sophistry, but in proofs of the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost," (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.) God has evinced that this doctrine came from him, through miracles and through a variety of miraculous gifts.[1]

[1] Heb. ii. 3, 4. See also 2 Cor. xii. 12; Gal. iii. 5; 1 Thess. i. 5.

And yet more—they assert that they had even imparted to their hearers the power of working miracles; that only by laying their hands on them they had enabled them to speak fluently foreign languages which they had never learned, to heal the sick by a mere word, and even to prophesy. "I, who have given you the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, and wrought miracles among you, have I preached to you the law of Moses, or the doctrine of faith?" (Gal. iii. 5.) "To one of you is given the gift of languages, to another the gift of healing sicknesses, to a third yet other miraculous powers," (1 Cor. xii. xiii.) Saint Paul appeals in the presence of large communities, at Corinth, a town of considerable consequence, and much frequented; in Galatia; and before Jewish converts, who were by no means well disposed towards him; before communities, in which were his most bitter enemies, who had actually formed themselves into a party against him; in epistles, wherein he gives them sharp reproofs, appeals to miracles which he had performed before them; and to miraculous gifts, which he had imparted, and which continued to exist among them. Still more than all this, he himself announces, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, a new miracle which he could perform, in proof of his divine mission, on an incestuous person, though at a distance, by inflicting on him a severe disease, (1 Cor. v. 3—5.) Now, in these cases, deceit or fanaticism is absolutely impossible. For, notwithstanding these circumstances, it would have been certainly impossible for the apostle ever to have persuaded the Corinthians, Galatians, and Hebrews that they could speak foreign languages, with which they in fact had no acquaintance; that they could heal the sick, whom they in fact could not heal; or that the incestuous person was fallen into a severe illness, when they knew him to be perfectly well. Saint Paul and the other writers of the New Testament, must have been absolutely out of their senses if they had spoken in this manner without foundation and truth. And supposing that they had done so, like the modern pretenders to inspiration, who in London promised to raise the dead to life; then the same effects would have followed in the former case, which happened in the latter. They would have been considered as visionaries and madmen, their religion as absurdity and imposture. Now as this did not happen, but, on the contrary, their persons and religion found such credit and extensive reception, this fact is therefore a perfectly convincing and incontrovertible proof—I might justly assert, of the historical certainty of their miracles, and of the divinity of their religion; but here I content myself with saying—of the entire credibility of these men.

SECT. VIII.—THEY HAD NOTHING TO EXPECT BUT TEMPORAL DISADVANTAGES.

And what was there which could have instigated them to forge these circumstances, and to propagate them with such perseverance? What had they to expect from their evidence? A miserable life; bitter railleries and scorn from the philosophers of their time; cruel persecutions from the Jews, from the heathen priests, merchants, and magistracy: for the history which they published must necessarily have appeared absurd to witlings and imaginary philosophers; and had a tendency not less important than the entire overthrow of the whole idolatrous worship of the Gentiles, and the abolition of the religion of the Jews. But, it may be urged, were not these consequences of their preaching unexpected? No: they themselves foresaw that their doctrine would be ridiculed by the philosophers (1 Cor. i. 23) of their time, and persecuted by the powerful with the sword and the cross, (Rom. viii. 35—39; 1 Cor. xv. 19.)

SECT. IX.—THEY SUFFERED FOR THE TRUTH OF THEIR NARRATION EVERY THING, EVEN DEATH, AND BROUGHT MANY OF THEIR CONTEMPORARIES TO THE SURE CONVICTION OF ITS TRUTH.

After all that has been said, should any suspicion of dishonesty still remain, it must instantly vanish when we reflect that these witnesses suffered so many afflictions and sufferings; such bitter and mortifying affronts; many of them the most grievous torments and the most painful death, with such composure and truly heroic tranquillity, for the sake of their evidence, and still continued to support it even to their last breath; and that by their testimony, they so certainly convinced a vast number of their contemporaries, who, without any trouble, could have proved the truth or falsehood of their history, that even these likewise sacrificed their temporal happiness and their lives to its truth. During the lifetime of some of them, that is, before the conclusion of the first century, numerous communities of Christians were already formed in all the three parts of the then known world. Their doctrine found great support in Asia, at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Smyrna, Laodicea, Cesarea, &c.; in Africa, at Alexandria; in Europe, at Rome, the metropolis of the world, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, and in many other great, civilized, and flourishing places.[1] These communities

[1] See Benson's *History of the First Planting of the Christian Religion*, London, 1744, vol. ii. in 4to. Fabricii, *Salutaris lux toti mundo exoriens*, Hamburg, 1731, in 4to. in which is given a catalogue of these Christian communities which can be proved to have been planted in the time of the apostles. Among the first

did not consist of merely low, mean, and ignorant people; but many great and learned men acknowledged themselves to belong to their communion. Among their first followers are found the Proconsul Sergius Paulus, (Acts, xiii. 7—12;) Dionysius, a member of the council of Areopagus, together with his wife, and many other Athenians, (xvii. 34;) several persons belonging to the court of the Emperor Nero, (Phil. iv. 22;) Erastus, chamberlain at Corinth, (Rom. xvi. 23;) some of the primates of Asia, (Acts, xix. 31;) and Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hegesippus, Melito, Miltiades, Pantænus, Hippolitus Portuensis, Ammonius, and Origen, — men, of whom some were philosophers, and accurately acquainted with the best writings, and all the learning of the Gentiles.[2]

All these persons lived at a time when, with inconsiderable trouble, and without the application of much learning, they might have inquired into the truth or falsehood of the Christian history. It deserves to be remarked here, that even in the third century persons were alive, who had communicated with the contemporaries of the apostles; and consequently might have derived the evidence for the truth or falsehood of those events from the first source. Saint John the apostle lived until the year of Christ 100. Polycarp, his disciple and most intimate friend, and who was personally acquainted with some of the other apostles, until 167. His disciple, Irenæus, who was in habits of intercourse with many of the immediate contemporaries and scholars of the apostles, lived until 202. Origen, the oracle of the Christians, who was celebrated about this time at Alexandria, and was connected with the most considerable Christians in Egypt and in almost the whole of the East, had consequently without doubt collected information on the Christian history from many persons, who, as well as Irenæus, had received their intelligence from the immediate contemporaries of the apostles. But the many thousands who became Christians in the first century were far better qualified for that inquiry: since Christianity was preached at a time when learning of every kind flourished under the government of the Romans; and received its origin in a country which at that period, through its governors and military concerns, had frequent intercourse with the Romans and with the most polished nations of the world.

These men, of whom some were distinguished by rank and learning, and all in a condition to examine into the truth of the Christian history with little or no trouble; who were educated in religions and customs (and who is ignorant of the power of custom and education?) which Christianity absolutely rejected; received this history, and embraced the religion, — a religion, which obliged them to change entirely their whole course of life, all their former actions and inclinations, (Ephes. iv. 17—24; v. 1—21;) which every moment endangered their goods, their consequence, and their lives. To this religion, which demanded nothing less than the sacrifice of all their former modes of thinking, customs, and darling passions; to this religion, I say, they were so devoted, and embraced it with so much zeal, that multitudes sacrificed to it all their comforts, wealth, peace, and consequence; and, which is still more, the love of their families: and, still confessing its truth, suffered steadily, and with a composure both tranquil and rational, the most horrible tortures, and the most painful death.[3]

Here, therefore, we have another and very forcible proof of the credibility of the writers of the New Testament. A number of men, consisting of many hundreds and thousands, among whom were several of considerable consequence and learning, arose and testified with admirable constancy to the truth of facts, which they had every opportunity of knowing and proving. And this their testimony is equally as weighty as if they had left it in writing, and that writing had been transmitted down to us. "For," to use the words of Butler,[4] "were a fact expressly related by one or more ancient historians, and disputed in after ages: that this fact is acknowledged to have been believed by great numbers of the age in which the historian says it was done, would be allowed an additional proof of such fact, quite distinct from the express testimony of the historian. The credulity of mankind is acknowledged: and the suspicions of mankind ought to be acknowledged too; and their backwardness ever to believe, and greater still to practise, what makes against their interest."

conversions none is more remarkable than that of Saint Paul, (Acts, ix. and xxvi. 1—23.) Lyttelton has shewn, in his *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of Saint Paul, in a Letter to Gilbert West*, that this event cannot be attributed to the deceit of others, nor to the deceit or fanaticism of Saint Paul himself; but that it is true, and consequently an incontrovertible proof of the divinity of the Christian religion.

[2] See above, Part I. Book ii.

[3] See below, book ii. chapters 1, 2.

[4] Butler's *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the course of Nature*, pp. 335, 336, edit. 1791.

BOOK II.

THE WONDERFUL ESTABLISHMENT AND PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY, IS A MOST CONVINCING PROOF OF THE ENTIRE CREDIBILITY OF THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND OF THE RELIGION WHICH IT ESTABLISHES.

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WONDERFUL PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

I. *Christianity spreads itself almost immediately over the whole world.*

It is truly astonishing how widely Christianity had extended itself almost immediately at its first rise. In less than fifty years numerous Christian communities had been established in every part, and in the most considerable cities, of the then known world.[1] The little seed was already grown up to a lofty and wide-spreading tree; and in the two following centuries it cast its beneficent shade continually wider towards the East and West. In the beginning of the fourth century the whole of the great and extensive empire of the Romans was filled with Christians, who held the most considerable employments in the state. The very courts of the heathen emperors contained men of scarcely any other persuasion. Under the persecution of Dioclesian, a whole city in Phrygia was burnt, because all the inhabitants had embraced that faith. Some of the emperors (as Maxentius, for instance) were obliged to spare the Christians on account of the people at Rome. It was this externally flourishing state of the Church, from the dissentions and vices which it occasioned, that became the principal cause of the terrible persecutions of the Christians in the fourth century.[2] Lastly, in the person of Constantine the Great, Christianity ascended even the imperial throne.

II. *It prevailed without the assistance of any temporal power.*

This rapid and successful progress was not effected by any human power. No prince, king, or emperor had adopted it; no sword was drawn in its cause; no armies took the field; no territories were conquered. It could neither procure riches for its followers, nor exalt them to employments of consequence. On the contrary, amidst poverty and obscurity, and entirely devoid of all temporal influence and greatness, did Christianity exist in the world until the fourth century. Instead of being supported and extended by earthly power and magnificence, it was rather obstructed by that very cause. Its exaltation to the throne was the epoch of its decline both externally and internally.

III. *Through thirteen poor, inconsiderable, unlearned, and almost unknown men.*

About thirteen men,[3] who were members of a nation despised by the Romans and Greeks; of the meanest extraction; brought up from their infancy in the employment of fishermen; formed in no schools of the rhetoricians; unacquainted with any part of the wisdom of the philosophers, or of the knowledge of the learned; abandoned, persecuted, hated by all, even by their relatives; these men arise, relate the history of Jesus, assert his resurrection and his numerous miracles, and on this foundation preach Christianity; and Jews, Greeks, Romans, and the whole world, embrace their doctrine.

IV. *Amidst the most dangerous internal disturbances and distractions.*

Many philosophers and scholars also became Christians. These men began in the second century, by introducing their fancies and errors, to deform the amiable simplicity of this religion; to obscure its splendour, and to diminish its strength. And now appear various heretics; this society, which had been most cordially united in the bands of love, is severed into numerous sects; genuine Christian virtue continually decreases; and superstition, fanaticism, and vice occupy its place. Thus, so early as the beginning of the second century, the Christian religion was compelled to struggle with dangerous enemies even in its own bosom!

V. *Under the most cruel external persecutions, and the opposition of the whole world.*

From without, if not more dangerous, yet more powerful and terrible enemies, united themselves against it. Christianity had an object no less important than the overthrow of the superstition of the Jews, and the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles, which comprehended the whole of the existing world. It was therefore opposed by all. The powerful and rich Jews, who were spread over every region of the Roman empire, at Jerusalem, in Palestine, at Damascus, at Alexandria, at Rome, employed all their power and artifice to extirpate the Christian name from the face of the earth. The apostles were many times scourged and banished; Saint Stephen stoned; the Christians expelled from Jerusalem; Saint James beheaded; Saint Paul chased from one place to another, imprisoned, scourged; and, in a word, the wrath of the Roman magistracy,

[1] See above, p. 60.

[2] See the beautiful extract from Eusebius in Dr Semler's *Hist. Eccles.* l. 100.

[3] See above, Part II. Book i.

together with the fury of the people, every thing was summoned up in order to choke the tender plant in its first shooting. Among the Gentiles religion was a part of their polity, and so interwoven with the state and civil government, that the governors and magistracy opposed any alteration of the established religion as strenuously as they would have resisted the overthrow of their own authority and the destruction of the state. These magistrates were also in general the priests of paganism. And where this was not the case, yet even there the whole body of the priesthood derived their subsistence from this imposture, obtained from it their high civil privileges, were very numerous and very powerful in the state, and stood, from the above mentioned causes, in the most intimate connection with the magistracy. The people blindly followed these conductors. Their education, and customs inherited from father to son, made the worship of idols a second nature to them; and their vicious appetites could find nothing more convenient or more desirable than a religion which sold all the favours of the gods for sacrifices, incense, purifications, and similar corporeal ceremonies. They who were called philosophers at that time were so violently captivated with that to which they applied the term wisdom, namely, with their metaphysical fancies, sceptical follies, and rhetorical arts, that they set in motion all the powers of ridicule, and all the artifices of sophistry, to banish a religion from the world, which so simplified the whole system of wisdom, and established it in such a manner as to be comprehended by every capacity, and founded all the happiness of the human race on one that had been crucified. Thus, then, all that was powerful in the heathen world became most zealously hostile to the Christian faith. From the time of Nero, the emperors of Rome enacted laws, intended for the extirpation of Christianity. This tyrant commanded its followers to be sewn up in the skins of beasts, and these saturated with oil, to be lighted up by night for a public spectacle. But it was not the cruel Nero alone who persecuted the Christians; even the mild Trajan, and the philanthropic Marcus Antoninus, ordered that they should be compelled by imprisonments and torments to renounce their religion.[4] In opposition to all these numerous and princely powers, in opposition to the whole Roman empire, were placed these poor unlettered fishermen, joined by a Paul, equally poor and inconsiderable; and they not only defended themselves, but even conquered: overthrew the united subtlety and power of emperors, kings, governors, generals, merchants, sophists, and of the people; and on the ruins of Judaism and paganism, founded the religion of Jesus! It would have been apparently much easier for these thirteen men, alone and without any assistance, to have overthrown the whole Roman force, and to have placed themselves on the imperial throne.[5]

[4] See Franc. Balduini *Ad edicta vett. principum Romanorum de Christianis*, Moshemii *Institut. Hist. Eccles. maj.* et Ruinarti *Præf. ad acta Martyrum.*

VI. *And although exciting the repugnance of the human heart.*

But perhaps it may be said, they knew how to interest the sinful inclinations of the human heart in their favour! Directly on the contrary, Christianity excites all these inclinations, without exception, against itself. And what is the power of kings and emperors, when compared with the enmity of the ruling passions of the human heart? The religion of the New Testament announces the most irreconcilable hostility to pride, ambition, vanity, avarice, revenge, impurity, and every other sinful, that is, universally injurious, inclination and appetite. It requires of its followers that they shall not possess any such appetites and thoughts even in their hearts. It requires that they shall practise invariably and universally an unqualified, unwearied, unrelaxed, and active philanthropy. It requires that they shall be cordially benevolent even to their enemies, and win and make them happy by acts of beneficence and blessings of every kind. It also requires us to sacrifice all our innocent pleasures and profits, in a word, all our temporal advantages, even health and life, to the general good of mankind, nay, of our most mortal enemies; and suffer for their sake every kind of calamity, trouble, danger, and torment. It declares, that neither any *viva voce* confession of certain formularies, nor the exercise of any corporeal ceremonies, but that such a virtue as is grounded in the heart, which continually acts, and incessantly increases, is the only mean whereby we can obtain the favour of the Divinity, and the bliss of heaven. In this manner Christianity raised against itself the ruling passions of the human heart, and the whole world. And yet this small grain of mustard seed, as the author of our holy religion had many times prophesied, became a large tree, on whose branches the birds of the air lodged; and grew up, like the seed which is sown, unobserved and rapidly, to the full grain in the ear.[6] Christianity converts millions in every part of the world; and though exposed to continually increasing dangers, extends itself abroad; and, lastly, at the present day is embraced and confessed by the tenth part of the human race.[7]

[5] See Lyttelton *On the Conversion and Apostleship of Saint Paul*, and Jortin's *Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion*, pp. 87—116 of the second edition.

[6] Matth. xiii. 31—33; Mark, iv. 26—29.

[7] Robert Millar's *History of the Propagation of Christianity*,

CHAPTER II.

THAT THE OLD WORLD WAS INTOLERANT.

Voltaire boldly asserts,[8] that the Gentiles in general, and particularly the Romans, were by no means intolerant. "Nothing," he exclaims, "was more social than the heathen religion. The Romans permitted the exercise of every religion, and considered religious tolerance as one of the most salutary laws of the state. This monster, this pest of the world, Intolerance, is a daughter of Christianity!"

SECT. I. — OF THE EGYPTIANS, GRECIANS, AND ROMANS.

I. Not to mention the old Persians, who destroyed all the statues in the temples of the Egyptians and Grecians; nor the Carthaginians, who were in the utmost degree jealous of the service of the gods of their state, what do these adversaries of Christianity think of the incessant civil wars among the Egyptians? One province of the country waged war on another, because the latter worshipped the ox, the dog, the wolf, the cat, and other brute beasts, as gods, whilst the former slew and consumed them! What of that established law of the country, which condemned to death the person who should destroy one of the animals to which divine honours were paid? A Roman, as Diodorus relates, who was himself an eye-witness of the fact, had accidentally killed a cat, and was immediately put to death by the enraged people. From a similar cause, the inhabitants of the city Ombi became engaged in a quarrel with those of Tentyra, which was conducted with so much violence, that the Tentyrans cut to pieces on the spot a citizen of Ombi, who had been taken prisoner, and ate him still reeking with blood.[1]

> Summus utrinque
> Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum
> Odit uterque locus, quum solos credat habendos
> Esse deos, quos ipse colit.
>
> JUVENAL, *Sat.* 15.

II. If this be called tolerance, the Grecians were also tolerant in a very high degree. At Athens, every citizen swore an oath, that he would acknowledge the religion of the country, and defend it against every other. Certain laws forbade men to dispute concerning the gods, or to dishonour them, under very heavy, and in some cases, mortal punishment;[2] and their severity was felt by many of the most worthy men. Protagoras was driven into exile, because in his writings he had merely called in question the existence of the gods, and his works were publicly burned.[3] Anaxagoras, the first who taught among them the doctrine of one supreme Being, was condemned to death because he named the sun, which the Athenians worshipped as a divinity, a burning fire.[4] And every one knows the fate of the greatest of all the philosophers of antiquity, who, on account of his purer and excellent doctrines concerning God and providence, was compelled to drink the poisoned bowl. His disciple also, the noble Plato, who has so affectingly described the martyrdom of Socrates, even he gives, under the laws of the wise state which he describes, this command, — Let the calumniators of the gods be first reproved, and if that be of no avail, let them be punished, even with death.[5] And this was the ruling sentiment of all Greece, as is clearly evinced by what are called the holy, that is, the religious wars. At the time of Pericles, the Athenians waged war on the Lacedemonians, because they had, in common with the Phocians, the superintendence of the temple of Apollo at Delphi.[6] At another time, a similar religious war was the pretext for Philip of Macedon to subjugate Greece. The Phocians had appropriated to themselves a field dedicated to Apollo at Delphi. The council of Amphictyons pronounced them on this account guilty of sacrilege, adjudged them to pay a certain sum of money, and on their refusing to pay it, war was solemnly proclaimed against them, in which all Greece took a part, and which continued with great violence during the space of ten years.[7] And who is ignorant of the cruelties and terrible torments by which Antiochus Epiphanes wished to compel the Jews to sacrifice to idols, and to renounce their paternal religion?

III. But among the Romans, we are told, intolerance was unknown; all sects enjoyed under them the most perfect liberty of conscience and religion. Yet was it one of the fundamental laws of the state, (of the XII Tables,) "Deos peregrinos ne colunto;" and Cicero, one of the greatest orators and lawyers, reckoned it among the most necessary laws of every wise state, "separatim nemo habessit deos, neve novos: sed ne advenas, nisi publice

London, 1731, 2 vols. in 8vo. contains much useful matter, particularly respecting the missions of Christians into heathen countries; but it is only a compilation from well known books, it cannot always be depended upon, not is it by any means complete. The reader will find in Fabricii *Salutaris lux Evangelii toti orbi Exoriens*, in 4to. an account of the writers on the history of Christianity.

[8] Traité de la Tolerance, Si les Romains ont été tolérans.

[1] See Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and particularly Juvenal's 15th Satire, in which he paints the superstition and intolerance of the Egyptians, and relates that horrible history which took place in his time.

[2] Strobæus *De Repub.* Serm. 41, Petiti Leg. att.

[3] Cicero *De Nat. Deor.* i. 23.

[4] Diogenes Laertius, ii.

[5] De Legibus, x.

[6] Plutarch in Pericle, Thucyd. i.

[7] Diodorus Siculus, xvi.

adscitos, privatim colunto."[8] When, in the year of the city 326, a great drought and infectious disorder raged, superstition so far attained the superiority, that on every side were seen new gods and new forms of divine service. The government, therefore, enjoined the Ediles to be vigilant, "Ne qui nisi Romani dii, neu quo alio more quam patrio colerentur."[9] In like manner, under great disasters, the state was purified from foreign religions.[10] Mæcenas advised the Emperor Augustus to forbid not only atheism, but also all foreign divine worship, both from religious and political principles. "Worship," said he to him,[11] "the gods yourself, and compel others to do the same. Abhor all those who would make any innovations in religion, and punish them. Suffer no atheists, magicians," &c. Tiberius expelled from Rome all who were devoted to the Egyptian, Jewish, and in general, to any foreign divine worship.[12] Four thousand of these men were, merely for the sake of their religion, sent to Sardinia to fight against the robbers, "si ob gravitatem cœli interiissent, vile damnum," and all the rest were chased out of Italy.[13] I have already spoken of the hard, and in part cruel, persecutions of the Christians. Even the mild Trajan commanded Pliny to execute the Christians.[14] Not only the Romans, but also the Grecians, and in general all idolaters, readily adopted foreign idolatrous worship: it was, in fact, a part of their religion; for they imagined that every nation, and every affair in the world, had its peculiar god, and believed themselves to be safe in proportion to the number of the gods that they worshipped. But with so much greater severity did they persecute all foreign religions not established by the state, and more particularly the Christian, because it condemned all idolatrous worship, and all slavish adoration of the emperors. The laws, customs, and sentiments of the Egyptians, Grecians, and Romans, put this matter beyond all doubt.

SECT. II. — THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIANITY ON THIS SUBJECT.

Christianity was the very first system of religion which introduced among men an unlimited, enlightened, and charitable toleration of all who professed religious articles different from its own. It is true, that the Mosaic law tolerated strangers, without compelling them to embrace the Israelitish religion: but they were obliged to renounce the worship of idols; and every idolater was punished with death, — a severity which was rendered necessary by the existing situation of the world, and the vices, and cruelties, and assassinations, inseparably connected with the idolatrous worship of the times. The New Testament here also extends and exalts virtue. No man, according to its laws, shall be despised on account of his religious opinions, be they ever so absurd and injurious; still less shall he be stigmatized by mortifying and calumniating appellations; and least of all, condemned and pronounced incapable of the favour and bliss of God. It commands, farther, that Christianity shall not be pressed on any heretic, and least of all through corporeal means: that those appointed for that purpose shall explain the Christian religion to him with sound arguments and mildness, but leave the choice entirely to his own judgment: that above all, the Christian shall desire and hope for the salvation of every man whose religious sentiments are erroneous, even though he be a contemner of religion or an atheist, love him as cordially as he would a believing brother, act with benevolence and beneficence towards him, and pray to God for his happiness.[1] That in this manner the Christian shall on the one side avoid and flee from every error, abominate in particular those which are pernicious to the general welfare, consequently, most of all, errors in religious concerns, and labour, on the contrary, with all earnestness and zeal after truth, particularly in religion, the highest concern of man. On the other side, he shall be attached with brotherly love to him who errs, is deceived, or led into sin, recommend to him at proper opportunities the truth with firmness and ferveney, endeavour to win him by every action of kindness and beneficence; but give up to his own judgment the perfect liberty of choice. Such a tolerance, absolutely unlimited, and purified from all indifference towards the truth, is taught, and indeed was first taught, by Christianity! Intolerance, on the other hand, is, according to its principles, not only to afflict men with civil punishments on account of mere matters of religion, to compel them to renounce their religion, or to put them to death for the sake of it; but also, to refuse residence in a country, together with the free exercise of their religion to religious societies, whose tenets are not pernicious to any principles of civil right, and, in short, to withhold from any one, simply on account of his articles of faith, those charitable services which

[8] De Legibus, ii. 8.

[9] Livius Histor. iv. 30.

[10] Livius Histor. ix. 30; xxv. 1; xxxix. 16, Quoties hoc patrum avorumque ætate, negotium est magistratibus datum, ut sacra externa fieri vetarent, omnem disciplinam sacrificandi præterquam more Romano abolerent?

[11] Dio Cassius, lib, lii.

[12] Suetonii, *Tiber.* i. 36.

[13] Tacitus *Annal.* ii. 85.

[14] Plinii Epist. lib. x. ep. 97; Cornelii Van Bynkershoek *opuscula, De cultu religionis peregrinæ apud vet. Roman.*; et Jo. Dan. ab Hoven *Compensia, Fascic.* i. p. 33, s.

[1] Matth. x. 13; John, vi. 66—68; Rom. xiv.; 2 Cor. i. 24; iv. 2, 3; and other places.

are in our power. And this intolerance, according to its doctrine, is sin, (Rom. xiv. 23,) a renunciation and dishonouring of Christianity and its fundamental principles, (Luke, ix. 52—56,) is the destruction of one of its essential laws, the love of our brethren, (1 Tim. vi. 1—6,) and even a crime against the injured majesty of God, (Rom. xiv. 1—13.) When, therefore, as early as the fourth century,[2] men, who bore the name of Christians, began to persecute those who differed in religious opinions from themselves, and to consider and to punish what they called heresy as a civil crime; when Augustine placed this religious persecution among the Christian doctrines; when men, in the eighth century, began to propagate the Christian religion (as they erroneously named it) with fire and sword; when, shortly afterwards, the term *Heretic* became a magic word which transformed thousands of men into tigers; when we read of the Christian crusades against heretics and unbelievers; and when, lastly, the inquisition became established in the very bosom of Christendom, that most terrible of all tribunals, which, nevertheless, was named *the holy*, and in the name of Christ and of God murdered, burnt, desolated—

> Tristius haud illa monstrum, nec sævior ulla
> Pestis et ira Deûm stygiis sese extulit undis: —

who can lay these abuses, or even the least part of them, to the charge of Christianity? Sooner might we reject all the arts of medicine, because ignorant pretenders to skill in that science have robbed men of their health and lives; sooner condemn all civil society, because tyranny, riot, and anarchy have often arisen out of it; sooner call reason, that pre-eminent quality of man, the pest of humanity, because the Alexanders, Cæsars, Neros, and Buonapartes use it for the devastation of the earth, — than call Christianity intolerant on account of the abominations of such disgraces to humanity, who apply to themselves its name! Christianity, which first introduced among men a tolerance as unlimited as enlightened and charitable!

CHAPTER III.

PARALLEL BETWEEN THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY, AND OF THE RELIGION OF MAHOMET.

Thus Christianity established itself in the world, never persecuting, but incessantly persecuted; under various difficulties from within; and infinite oppositions, persecutions, and cruelties from without; entirely through itself, through its own doctrines and laws: and spread itself over every part of the globe!

[2] See above, p. 21.

It is true, the religion of Mahomet likewise extended itself with most astonishing rapidity and facility over the face of the earth. Scarcely had ten years elapsed since his flight from Mecca, (the Hegira,) when he had brought all the tribes of the Arabians under the yoke of his religion and sovereignty; and a short time afterwards his religion had swallowed up the numerous and flourishing churches in the East, overflowed the West, and was become the terror of united Christendom. This event is truly astonishing; and the enemies of Christianity have not failed to make use of it as an argument to shew that there was nothing miraculous in the extension of the religion of Jesus.[1] But in this they have either not known, or have anxiously suppressed, the connections and means of assistance which favoured Mahomet, and which leave nothing wonderful in the success of his doctrine. Mahomet came into the world exactly at the time proper for his purposes. Religion in Arabia Felix, the paternal country of his new system, was then in the most deplorable state. The inhabitants of the country were divided into four religious parties. Some of them were devoted to the idolatrous worship of the Sabians, who adored the stars as divinities; and others to Zendicism, or the idolatry of the Magi, who worshipped fire. The Jewish religion had a great many followers, who treated the others with much cruelty; and the Christians who were resident there at that time, formed principally an assemblage of different heretical sects, who had taken refuge among this free people, because they were not tolerated in the Roman empire. Under such a distracted state of religion, it would have been highly wonderful if Mahomet had not procured in a short time a numerous train of followers. The Christian religion, on the contrary, received its origin in a country where the only true God was worshipped, and the Mosaic law (which it abrogated) universally revered. The political state of the world at the period when Mahomet appeared was uncommonly favourable to a new conqueror. The western part of the Roman empire was then overflowed by the Goths; and the eastern so weakened through the Huns and Persians, that it could resist no vigorous attack; without taking into consideration the absurd superstition, the horrid contests, and bloodthirsty spirit of persecution, which had then almost entirely extinguished Christianity. In the Persian empire existed ruinous internal commotions, which were excited principally through the impious doctrine of Manes, and the desolating principles of Mazdack, who, a short time before the appearance of Mahomet, had given himself out for a prophet, and

[1] Boulainvilliers, *Vie de Mahomed, avec des reflexions sur la religion Mahomedane, et les coutumes des Musulmans.* Amsterdam, 2d edit. 1731, in 8vo. p. 442.

introduced a community of wives and of property. But at the time of the apostles, the power of the Romans was still in its meridian height, and had united almost the whole globe under its sovereignty.

Again, Arabia was very populous; many Jews and Christians had taken refuge there from other kingdoms where they had been persecuted by the prevailing sects. The Arabians were a free people; not devoted like other nations to the extravagances of lustful pleasures, but temperate and hardy, and therefore properly qualified for new conquests. This brave people was at that time divided into separate tribes, who were all independent, and connected with one another in no political union: a circumstance which uncommonly facilitated the conquests of Mahomet. Mahomet himself was descended from a family of much power and consequence; and by a marriage with an opulent widow became one of the richest men in Mecca. He was endowed with fine and politic talents; and from the various journeys which he made in his mercantile concerns, had acquired a perfect acquaintance with the constitution of the country. He compounded his new religious system out of all the four prevailing religions of Arabia. From the idolatry of the Sabians and Magi he took the divine celebration of Friday, and of the four months in the year; the pilgrimage to Mecca, together with different superstitious fables concerning the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment. From the Jews he borrowed many tales, particularly concerning angels; numerous purifications and fasts; the prohibition of certain kinds of food, and of usury; the permission of polygamy and of capricious divorce. From the Christian sects he derived a variety of doctrinal tenets, as well false as true, concerning the divine decrees; the authority of Jesus and of the evangelists; the resurrection of the body; the universal judgment of men; together with many moral precepts. Thus he united by this mixture all the four religions of his paternal country, and thereby procured a more easy admittance for his new doctrine. Farther, he established his religion in such a manner that it did not excite against itself the passions of men, but on the contrary flattered them in various ways. According to his system the sum of religion consisted in the performance of certain corporeal ceremonies —purifications, the recital of certain prayers, alms, fasts, and pilgrimages to Mecca. It was truly much easier to perform these than to restrain lusts, to suppress all sinful appetites, and to confine those which are innocent within their proper bounds. He attributed such a value to these mechanical ceremonies, that he supposed atonement to be thereby made for every crime and every sin. Such a doctrine, so extremely accommodating to the sinful passions of every kind, together with the permission of polygamy and capricious divorce, and the promise of a full enjoyment of gross, sensual luxuries in a future life, brought more men under his subjection than could have been effected by a moderate army. And lastly, Mahomet was not so much a prophet as a soldier. He endeavoured to propagate his religion not through arguments, he did not address it to the understanding; but he appealed to arms, and made it a fundamental law of his religion[2] to wage incessant war against unbelievers; and, should they refuse either to become Mahometans, or to purchase a freedom of religion from the hands of the faithful, by the payment of a certain tribute, to decide the matter with the sword.

Under such circumstances it would have been a phenomenon most wonderful, and at variance with the whole analogy of history, if the doctrine of the prophet of Arabia had experienced an unhappy, or even a less fortunate fate. But that an history, and a religion founded thereon, which was diametrically opposed to all the modes of divine service that existed at the time of its origin, and could be established on nothing else but on their ruins —which demanded from its followers, under the punishment of eternal misery, a perfect change in the whole train of their thoughts; a detestation of all unchaste pleasures, fornication, adultery, polygamy, wanton and dissolute divorce; the absolute avoidance of all ambitious, covetous, and avaricious projects and concerns; and which placed the essence of the true worship of God not in visible ceremonies, but in a pure, humble, philanthropic, and truly virtuous mind:—that a religion, which was supported by no powerful men, but was preached by thirteen poor, despised, and illiterate persons; that this religion, without any the least possible assistance of worldly power, without any active compulsion,[3] but, on the contrary, under the greatest oppression, afflictions, and torments of its supporters, should have prevailed over the whole nation of the Jews and the united power of the Romans; should have acquired in a few years many thousand followers; soon afterwards spread itself into the farthest parts of the North and West; and lastly, should have subjected even kings and emperors, together with the greatest and most civilized nations—this is an event which has not its parallel in all history; and can by no means be explained, without calling to our aid a most extraordinary support of the Almighty.

After what has been said, it is almost incomprehensible how Lord Bolingbroke could object against the Christian religion, that it had produced no effects worthy of a divine

[2] See the Koran, ch. 9.

[3] I speak here of its first propagation.

origin. What kind of effects is then demanded? "If the revelations," says Bolingbroke,[4] "which have been pretended, had not been pretended only, the necessary consequence would have been, that the system of religion and government would have been uniform through the whole world." And why? "Because the divine Omnipotence[5] would have imposed it on all mankind, so as necessarily to engage their assent." But God never acts in this manner in the government of the world, as far as we are acquainted with it. He has given us, as Bolingbroke confesses, a natural revelation of his will, since he has connected with certain modes of conduct either salutary or pernicious consequences, and bestowed reason on man to enable him to discover them. And yet it is evident, that he does not compel men to comply with this revelation. Religion cannot operate like a charm or a medicine; we may study and practise it or not. Agreeably to the moral nature of man, it produces no effects otherwise than through the understanding. And admitting that God had intended to compel men by his omnipotence to the practice of a certain religion, of what use then would have been an immediate written revelation. Either, therefore, there is no immediate written revelation of God; or the very existence of such a revelation proves, that it is God's will to deal with us, not according to his omnipotence, but in a moral manner, and to leave it entirely to our free will, whether we will follow what he has clearly revealed or not.

Indeed, the opponents of Christianity labour to destroy the miracle of its propagation, by producing a variety of natural causes, through which they endeavour to explain it. But the greater part of these pretended causes are forged; and even if we unite them all together, this event remains incomprehensible, unless we take into the account a higher support. 1*st*, What they say, in the first place, of fanaticism, is amply refuted in page 51. 2*d*, The pretext of universal tolerance under the Jews and Romans is evidently contradictory to history.[6] 3*d*, And the same may be said in answer to the assertion, that the first supporters of the Christian religion were exclusively simple and mean people.[7] Bolingbroke has chosen still another mode. He supposes this to have been the cause of its rapid and extensive progress, that the apostles used the artifice of receiving into the pale of Christianity all, without exception, both Jews and Gentiles.[8] But what assistance could that give to a religion which afforded not the least temporal advantage, but, on the contrary, placed its first supporters in danger of losing every thing they possessed in this world, nay, even life itself? Suppose a poor despised man, who could scarcely find support for himself, were to publish a declaration, that he would receive every one without distinction into his service, is it probable that a single person would be induced to enter into it? Another assertion, that a community of property was introduced in the earliest ages of the Church, is stated as a most powerful cause of the propagation of Christianity.[9] Should we grant, as his lordship pretends, without any foundation, and in opposition to history, that such a common stock existed in the primitive church, this very circumstance would have rather hindered the rich and powerful from embracing the religion. But the assertion is evidently false. Such a community of property existed only in the beginning, and indeed only in the parent community at Jerusalem, (Acts, v. vi.) The converts from paganism, who composed the far greatest part, were restrained from leaving their former condition and calling, (1 Cor. vii. 17—24, 30, 31; Tit. ii. 9, 10,) that through their diligence they might obtain support for themselves, and a trifle for the assistance of the necessitous, (Eph. iv. 28,) but were by no means allowed to afford nourishment to the indolent, (2 Thess. iii. 6—12.) And the apostles themselves followed this precept; they never once permitted the communities to maintain them, but themselves procured their own support, (2 Thess. iii. 7—9.)

Once more:—When we thus observe Christianity arising in the world, continuing and extending itself during eighteen hundred years, continually wider and wider; when we see that neither the idolatry, superstition, and infidelity which surrounded it on all sides; nor the united power of the world, which sought to extirpate it; nor the heretics who deformed it; nor the wretches who betrayed it; nor even its unworthy followers, who, particularly since the fourth century, scandalized it by their vices; nor, lastly, time, the great destroyer of all human things, have ever been in a condition, I will not say to annihilate, but even to alter it,—we cannot but recognize the traces of a superior Providence—we cannot but acknowledge that the inexplicable propagation of Christianity is a seal of the truth of the history of the New Testament, and, I dare pronounce, of the divine origin of its religion!

A SUMMARY RECAPITULATION, AND CONCLUSION OF THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Thus, by the calm and temperate language in which the writers of the New Testament relate their history, we become prejudiced in their favour. They do not declaim on Jesus,

[4] Works, vol. iv. p. 224. [5] Ibid. vol. v. pp. 261—267.
[6] See above, p. 64. [7] Ibid. p. 61. [8] Works, iv. p. 306.
[9] Works, iv. p. 422.

they deliver over him no panegyrics; but they let him act and speak. And they inform us of his actions, particularly his miracles, in the most simple manner, without any laboured ornaments, without any rhetorical amplification, and without any enthusiastic eulogies, nay, without even any calm explication of what is great and supernatural therein. They are related with a striking simplicity, exactly like the most general and commonplace circumstances.

These authors, as we have seen above, had every necessary qualification in order to know with certainty the truth of what they relate. We cannot discover in them a single spark of fanaticism. It is impossible that they could have been deceived in that of which they inform us; and still less were they deceivers: they who published their history on the spot and at the time where and when it happened; whose narration is in part remarkably confirmed by foreign authors; whose writings contain in themselves so many clear traces of truth; who oppose every kind of deceit in their doctrines and actions; who, from their preaching, had no temporal advantages to obtain, but, probably, all to lose; who, lastly, even sacrificed to their doctrine, rest, civil honour, and life. The character of these men is evidently the most noble and most amiable; open-hearted and honest in their instructions, mild and tolerant towards those who thought differently from themselves, serene and social in common intercourse, affectionate towards their friends, generous towards their enemies—they undertake a life composed of pure fatigue and difficulties, and suffer contempt and torment, in order to promulgate a history and religion built thereon, which they considered as the greatest blessing of the world; and their preaching is attended with the most wonderful effect. They are therefore not only credible, but they are so in a greater degree than Tacitus—they are credible evidences in the highest of all possible degrees. So that either there is absolutely no immediate revelation from God, or it is contained in the writings of the New Testament.

THE END.

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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

HISTORY AND EVIDENCE

OF THE

RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

BY GILBERT WEST, ESQ.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1749.

EDINBURGH:
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INTRODUCTION.

THE following Observations took their rise from a pamphlet, entitled, "The Resurrection of Jesus considered, in Answer to the Trial of the Witnesses: by a Moral Philosopher." The author of which, in order to overturn the testimony of the evangelists, hath attempted to shew that they contradict each other in the accounts they have given of this fact. To this pamphlet there came out two very learned and ingenious answers; which I read with great satisfaction, as I found in them solid confutations of many objections against Christianity started in the first. But I must confess, (though with the utmost respect to the knowledge and abilities of the authors of the two last-mentioned pamphlets,) that I was not so fully satisfied with their manner of clearing the sacred writers from the contradictions charged upon them. This set me upon reading and examining with attention the Scriptures themselves; and with no other bias, than what arose from the astonishment I was under at finding writers, who for above these sixteen hundred years have been reputed holy and inspired, charged with such a contrariety in their accounts, as ill agreed with either of those epithets. Of the truth of this charge, therefore, I acknowledge I had great difficulty to persuade myself. And indeed it was not long before I discovered, as I imagined, the vanity and weakness of such an imputation; which, however, I cannot style altogether groundless, since it has an appearance of being founded in the words of the Gospel; though, in reality, that foundation lies no deeper than the outside and surface of the words: neither will I call it malicious, since having upon farther inquiry found it to be of a very ancient date, I know not the first authors of it, and consequently can form no judgment of their intentions. What I have to offer in defence of the evangelists, is built in like manner upon the sacred text; whose true meaning (which upon this occasion I searched for in vain in the notes of many eminent commentators) I have endeavoured to investigate and prove, by comparing their several accounts with each other, and noting the agreement and disagreement of the circumstances. A method that hath led me unavoidably into critical observations; for the length and dryness of which I should, however, think myself obliged to make some excuse, did I write only for amusement, or expect to be read by those who seek in books for nothing more solid than entertainment.

But although the clearing the sacred writers from the imputation of contradicting each other, was the principal, and indeed the sole object I had at first in view; yet having, in the pursuit of this object, perceived the light breaking in upon me still more and more the farther I advanced, and discovering to me almost at every step some new circumstances, which tended to illustrate and confirm the testimony given by these inspired historians to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, I was induced, by these discoveries, to go very far beyond my first design, into a consideration of the evidences of this great and important article, not those only recorded in the sacred writings, but others arising from subsequent events and facts; of which we have, by several ways, many clear and unquestionable proofs. The method in which I have proceeded in this consideration, is as follows: I have begun with laying down the order in which the several incidents related by the evangelists appear to have happened; and in the next place, I have made some observations upon the method and manner in which the proofs of this astonishing event were laid before the apostles, who were appointed to bear witness of it to all the world. And to these I have, in the third place, added an exact and rigorous examination of the proofs themselves; from all which I have endeavoured to shew, that the Resurrection of Christ was most fairly and fully proved to the apostles and disciples, those first converts and preachers of Christianity.

But as the Resurrection's having been fully proved to the apostles, though absolutely necessary, yet is not of itself sufficient to authorize at this time, and establish, the faith of a Christian, I imagined that what I had already written would be imperfect, at least, if not altogether useless, unless I added some arguments and reasons I had to offer to induce us, who live at the distance of seventeen hundred years from the date of that miraculous event, to believe that Christ is risen from the dead. These reasons therefore I have thought proper to subjoin under two heads, namely, the testimony of the chosen witnesses of the Resurrection recorded in the Scriptures, and the existence of the Christian religion.

From this account of the rise, progress, and design of the following Observations, the reader will perceive that they were first begun with the single view of obtaining satisfaction for myself upon some difficulties in the evangelical history of the Resurrection; and that they are now published with the hopes of their being as useful to others, as they have been to me. This is the chief, if not the sole end that a layman can reasonably propose to himself in publishing any thing upon a subject of this nature: for I am not ignorant how little reputation is to be gained by writing on the side of Christianity, which by many people is regarded as a superstitious fable not worth the thoughts of a wise man; and considered by more as a mere political scheme, calculated to serve the power and interest of the clergy only. How absolutely groundless both these opinions are, will easily appear to any one, who will take the pains to examine fairly and impartially the Proofs and Doctrines of the Christian religion; Proofs established upon facts, the surest foundations of evidence; and Doctrines, derived by inspiration from the great Author of reason, and Father of all mankind. Whoever hath either neglected, or doth refuse to make this examination, can have no right to pass his judgment upon Christianity, and should, methinks, for the same reason, be somewhat cautious of censuring those who acknowledge it to be of divine institution; especially as he will find in the list of Christians, the great and venerable names of Bacon, Milton, Boyle, Locke, and Newton; names to whose authority every thing should submit but truth, to whom they themselves thought it not beneath their superior talents to submit, though she required them to believe in Christ.

But it may possibly be demanded, why, being a layman, I presume to intermeddle in a province commonly thought to belong peculiarly to the clergy? To which I answer, that besides the motives above suggested, this very prejudice was a powerful inducement to me to publish the following Observations, and to prefix my name to them. The clergy, I am sensible, are both ready and able to maintain the cause of Christianity, as their many excellent writings in defence of it sufficiently demonstrate; but as the generality of mankind is more governed by prejudice than reason, the writings of the clergy are not so universally read, or so candidly received as they deserve, because they are supposed to proceed, not from conscience and conviction, but from interested views and the common cause of their profession: a supposition evidently as partial and injurious as that would be, which should impute the gallant behaviour of our officers to the mean considerations of their pay, and the views of preferment, exclusive of all the nobler motives of a gentleman, namely, the sense of honour, and the love of his country. But the clergy, I dare say, who, if there be any thing besides prejudice in the above-mentioned imputation upon them, have alone the right to make this demand, will readily excuse my appearing in the cause of Christianity. And the laity, I hope, such of them at least as are Christians not in name and profession only, will join with me in declaring against the vain prejudices of unbelievers, that the Christian religion is of the utmost importance to all orders and degrees of men; and that the greatest service that the most zealous patriot can do his country, is to promote the faith, and thereby encourage the practice of the truly divine virtues recommended by Christ and his apostles.

For my own part, if any sincere inquirer after truth, any one honest man, shall receive the least benefit from the following Observations, I shall think I have neither written nor lived in vain.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

Sect. I.—John, xx. 1—18. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; and he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed; for as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead: then the disciples went away again unto their own homes. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; and they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."

From this passage of the gospel of Saint John, it is evident, 1*st*, that Mary Magdalene had not seen any vision of angels, before she ran to Peter; and consequently, that she was not of the number of those women who went into the sepulchre, and were there told by an angel that Jesus was risen: for had she, before she went to Peter, seen any angels, she would certainly have added so extraordinary a circumstance to her account; and had she been informed by an angel that Jesus was risen, she could not have persisted in lamenting at not being able to find the body; nor have inquired of him, whom she took to be the gardener, where he had put it, that she might take it away. It is also farther observable, that when, after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, and their departure from thence, she saw a vision of angels, she was standing without, at the sepulchre, weeping; that stooping down, and looking (not going) into the sepulchre, she saw two angels in white, "sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain," who said no more to her than, "Woman, why weepest thou?" To which she answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." From all which circumstances it appears, 2*dly*, that neither after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, was she with those women who went into the sepulchre, &c.; that she had not heard any thing of Christ's being risen from the dead; and that therefore those women, who were told by an angel that he was risen, were not at the sepulchre when she returned thither with Peter and John. And indeed, from the whole tenor of the above-cited passage of Saint John's gospel, throughout which no mention is made of any other woman besides Mary Magdalene, it is more than probable she was alone when she saw the angels, and when Christ appeared to her immediately after. That she was alone when

Christ appeared to her, is plainly implied in what Saint Mark says, (xvi. 9,) who tells us expressly, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which, had she been accompanied by the other women, could not have been spoken of her with any propriety of speech. In the 3*d* place, it is plain from the above relation, that the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they thought proper; for John and Peter going into the sepulchre saw no angels; but Mary, after their departure, looking in, saw two, one sitting at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Sect. II.—Luke, xxiv. 13—24. "The same day two of them (the disciples) went to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs, and they talked together of all these things that had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them; but their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive: and certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not."

The latter part of this passage, which contains an abridgment of a report made by some women to the apostles before these two disciples had left Jerusalem, suggests the following observations: 1*st*, The angels seen by these women at the sepulchre told them that Jesus was alive, whence it follows, that this report was not made by Mary Magdalene; for the angels which she saw said no such thing to her. 2*dly*, As there is no notice taken of any appearance of our Saviour to these women, it is also evident, that this report could not have been made by the other Mary and Salome, to whom, as they were going to tell the disciples the message of the angel which they had seen at the sepulchre, Jesus appeared, as I shall presently shew from Saint Matthew. 3*dly*, There were therefore several reports made at different times to the apostles, and by different women. At different times; for the two disciples, who, before they left Jerusalem, had heard the report now under consideration, had not heard those of Mary Magdalene, of the other Mary, and Salome. By different women; for it having been just now proved, that this report could not belong to either of the last-mentioned women, it must have been made by some other; and no other being named by any of the evangelists but Joanna, it came in all likelihood from her, and those that attended her. 4*thly*, Some of the disciples, upon hearing this report, "went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said," that is, in the most obvious sense of these words, they saw the body was gone, and they saw some angels. But I shall not insist upon this interpretation, but only observe, that if Peter be supposed to have been one of those disciples who, upon this information of the women, went to the sepulchre, this must have been the second time of his going thither. That Peter went a second time to the sepulchre I shall shew more at large, when I come to consider the former part of this chapter of Saint Luke.

These several conclusions being admitted, I think it will be no difficult matter to defend the evangelists against the imputation of contradicting each other, in the accounts they have given of what happened on the day of the resurrection. For unless authors, who relate different and independent parts of the same history, may, for that reason, be said to contradict each other, the evangelists, I will be bold to say, stand as clear of that charge, at least in that part of their writings which we are now examining, as any of the most accurate historians either ancient or modern; as I shall now endeavour to prove, by considering and comparing the several relations of this day's events in the gospels of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John. That written by Saint John I have already produced, so that there will be no occasion for inserting it again in this place; those of Saint Matthew and Saint Mark I shall produce and examine together, for reasons which will be evident hereafter.

Sect. III.—Matthew, xxviii. 1—17. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him

the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay: And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted."

Mark, xvi. 1—14. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him; and very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen, he is not here: Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen, early in the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

I shall range the observations I intend to make upon the several particulars contained in these two passages, under three heads. 1*st*, Of such circumstances as are related by one of these evangelists, but omitted by the other; the 2*d*, Of such as they both agree in; and the 3*d*, Of such as seem to clash and disagree with each other. 1*st*, The several particulars of the earthquake, the descent of the angel from heaven, his rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sitting upon it, and the terror of the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, are related only by Saint Matthew; as are likewise the appearances of our Saviour to the women, and to the eleven disciples in Galilee, and the flight of the guards into the city, and all that passed between them and the chief priests upon that occasion. On the other hand, Saint Mark alone makes mention of the women's having bought spices, that they might come and anoint the body of our Saviour—of Salome's being one of those women—of their entering into the sepulchre, and seeing there a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment—of the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene, to the two disciples who were going into the country, and lastly to the eleven as they sat at meat. As not one of all these circumstances can be proved to contradict or even disagree with any particular, which either of these evangelists has thought fit to mention, no argument against the reality or credibility of them can be drawn from their not having been taken notice of by both; unless it can be made appear, that a fact related by one historian, or one evidence, must therefore be false, because it is passed over in silence by another. Saint Matthew wrote his gospel first, within a few years after the ascension of our Lord; this gospel Saint Mark, who wrote his some years after, is said to have abridged; though this, I think, is said with very little propriety. For how can that book be styled an abridgment, which contains many particulars not mentioned in the original author? That Saint Mark relates many circumstances not taken notice of by Saint Matthew, will easily appear to any one who shall take the pains to compare them together; and of this, to go no farther, we

have a plain instance in the two passages before us.

Saint Matthew wrote his gospel at the request of the Jewish converts, who having lived in that country where the scene of this great history was laid, were doubtless acquainted with many particulars, which, for that reason, it was not necessary to mention. This will account for the conciseness, and seeming defectiveness of his narrations in many places, as well as for his omitting some circumstances which the other evangelists thought proper to relate. Saint Mark composed his for Christians of other nations, who, not having the same opportunities of being informed as their brethren of Judea, stood in need of some notes and comments to enable them the better to understand the extract, which Saint Mark chose to give them out of the gospel written by Saint Matthew. It was therefore necessary for Saint Mark to insert many particulars, which the purpose of Saint Matthew in writing his gospel did not lead him to take notice of. Allowing these evangelists to have had these two distinct views, let us see how they have pursued them in the passages now under consideration.

That the disciples of Jesus came by night, and stole away the body while the guards slept, was commonly reported among the Jews, even so long after the ascension of our Lord as when Saint Matthew wrote his gospel, as himself tells us, (xxviii. 15.) To furnish the Jewish converts with an answer to this absurd story, so industriously propagated among their unbelieving brethren, and supported by the authority of the chief priests and elders, this evangelist relates at large the history of the guarding the sepulchre, &c. the earthquake, the descent of the angel, his rolling away the stone, and the fright of the soldiers at his appearance, who shook and became as dead men. And indeed, by comparing this relation with the report given out by the soldiers, it will easily appear on which side the truth lay. For as there is nothing in the miraculous resurrection of our Lord so repugnant to reason and probability as that the disciples should be able to roll away the stone which closed up the mouth of the sepulchre, and carry off the body of Jesus, unperceived by the soldiers, who were set there on purpose to guard against such an attempt; so is it also evident, that the particulars of the soldiers' report were founded upon the circumstances of this history. In this report three things are asserted, namely, That the disciples stole the body,—that they stole it in the night,—and that they stole it while the guards were asleep. That Jesus came out of the sepulchre before the rising of the sun, Saint Matthew informs us, who says, that the earthquake, &c. happened at the time when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set out in order to take a view of the sepulchre, which was just as the day began to break. This fact was undoubtedly too notorious for the chief priests to venture at falsifying it, and was besides favourable to the two other articles: This therefore they admitted; and taking the hint from what the soldiers told them of their having been cast into a swoon or trance (becoming like dead men) at the appearance of the angel, and consequently not having seen our Saviour come out of the sepulchre, they forged the remaining parts of this story, that his disciples came and stole him away while they slept. They took the hint, I say, of framing these two last mentioned articles from that circumstance related by Saint Matthew, of the "keepers shaking and becoming like dead men" upon the sight of the angel; for throughout this whole history there was no other besides this, upon which they could prevaricate and dispute. The stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, and the body was gone; this the chief priests were to account for, without allowing that Jesus was risen from the dead. The disciples, they said, stole it away. What! while the guards were there? Yes, the guards were asleep. With this answer they knew full well many would be satisfied, without inquiring any farther into the matter; but they could not expect that every body would be so contented; especially as they had reason to apprehend, that although the soldiers, who had taken their money, might be faithful to them, keep their secret, and attest the story they had framed for them, yet the truth might come out, by means of those whom they had not bribed; for Saint Matthew says, (xxviii. 11,) that some of the watch went into the city, "and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done." Some therefore remained behind, who probably had no share of the money which the chief priests gave to the soldiers; or if they had, in all likelihood it came too late; they had already divulged the truth, as well from an eagerness, which all men naturally have, to tell a wonderful story, as from a desire of justifying themselves for having quitted their post. The chief priests, therefore, were to guard against this event also; in order to which nothing could be more effectual than to counterwork the evidence of one part of the soldiers, by putting into the mouths of others of them a story, which without directly contradicting the facts, might yet tend to overthrow the only conclusion which the disciples of Jesus would endeavour to draw from them, and which they were so much concerned to discredit; namely, that Jesus was risen from the dead. For if the disciples and partisans of Jesus, informed by one part of the soldiers of the several circumstances related in Saint Matthew, should urge these miraculous events as so many proofs of the resurrection of their

Master, the unbelieving Jews were, by the testimony of those suborned witnesses, instructed to answer, that the earthquake and the angel were illusions or dreams;—that the soldiers had honestly confessed they were asleep, though some of them, to screen themselves from the shame or punishment such a breach of discipline deserved, pretended they were frightened into a swoon or trance by an extraordinary appearance, which they never saw, or saw only in a dream;—that while they slept, the disciples came and stole the body; for none of the soldiers, not even those who saw the most, pretend to have seen Jesus come out of the sepulchre; they are all equally ignorant by what means the body was removed; when they awaked it was missing; and it was much more likely that the disciples should have stolen it away, than that an impostor should rise from the dead. I shall not go about to confute this story; to unprejudiced and thinking people it carries its own confutation with it; but I must observe, that it is founded entirely upon the circumstance of the soldiers not having seen Jesus come out of the sepulchre,—a circumstance, that even those who told the real truth could not contradict, though they accounted for it in a different manner, by saying they were frightened into a swoon or trance at the sight of a terrible apparition, that came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. But this fact the chief priests thought it not prudent to allow, as favouring too much the opinion of Christ's being risen from the dead; neither did they think proper to reject it entirely, because they intended to turn it to their own advantage; and therefore, denying every thing that was miraculous, they construed this swoon or trance into a sleep, and with a large sum of money, and promises of impunity, hired the soldiers to confess a crime, and, by taking shame to themselves, to cover them from confusion. And so far, it must be acknowledged, they gained their point: For, until some farther proofs of the resurrection of Jesus should be produced, of which at that time they had heard nothing more, this story would undoubtedly have served to puzzle the cause, and hold people in suspense. Argument and reason indeed were wholly on the other side, but prejudice and authority were on theirs; and they were not ignorant to which the bulk of mankind were most disposed to submit.

But as no other than presumptive arguments in favour of the resurrection could be drawn from what happened to the soldiers at the sepulchre, even though the chief priest had permitted them to tell the truth, Saint Matthew, in his narration, proceeds to second and confirm those arguments by positive evidence, producing witnesses who had seen and conversed with Jesus Christ after he was risen from the dead: of these, as may be gathered from the other gospels, the number was very considerable; and very numerous were the instances of Christ's appearing after his resurrection: yet from the latter has Saint Matthew selected only two, upon each of which I beg leave to make a few remarks. The first appearance of Christ is to the women, which happened as they went to tell the disciples the message of the angel that had appeared to them in the sepulchre. I have already proved, in my observations upon Saint John, that Mary Magdalene was not one of those women; and yet the words of Saint Matthew, by the common rule of construction, seem to import the contrary. For, in the *first* place, the paragraph, "and the angel answered and said to the women," is, in our translation, connected with the preceding by the copulative *and*. 2*dly*, As in the foregoing part of this chapter no mention is made of any other woman than Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and no hint given of any other angel than that described as descending from heaven, &c. the words in this paragraph "the angel, and the women," must be taken to relate to them. To which I answer, 1*st*, That this paragraph is not to be so connected with the preceding, as if nothing had intervened; since we shall find upon a closer examination of it, and comparing it with its parallel in Saint Mark, that between the keepers becoming like dead men, and the angels speaking to the women, Salome had joined the two Marys in their way to the sepulchre; that before they arrived there, the keepers were fled, and the angel was removed from off the stone, and was seated within the sepulchre; for which reason the particle δὲ, instead of being rendered by the copulative *and*, should rather be expressed by the disjunctive *but*, or *now*, as denoting an interruption in the narration, and the beginning of a new paragraph. 2*dly*, I allow the angel here spoken of to be the same with that mentioned in the foregoing verses, and the other Mary to be one of those women to whom this angel in the sepulchre, and afterwards Christ himself, appeared, and therefore admit the words "the angel and the women" in this verse relate to them. But this will not remove the difficulty, and it will be said, that either Mary Magdalene was with the other Mary in the sepulchre, or there is an inaccuracy in the expression; for the words, "*women*," and "fear not *ye*," being plural, imply there were more than one. I grant it, and Saint Mark informs us that Salome was there. But then, instead of one inaccuracy to be charged upon Saint Matthew, here are two,—Mary Magdalene, who was not present when the other Mary saw the angel, is, by the natural construction of his words, said to be there; and Salome, who was present, he takes no notice of at all. I

allow it; and let those who are given to object, make the most of it: but let it at the same time be remembered, that the greatest part of the evangelical writers were illiterate men, not skilled in the rules of eloquence, or grammatical niceties, against the laws of which it is easy to point out many faults in the writings of most of them. The other passage I proposed to make some remarks upon, affords another instance of the same kind: it is as follows:—"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted." Here the words, *some doubted*, by the strict rules of grammar, must be understood of some of the eleven disciples, who immediately before are said, when they saw Jesus, to have *worshipped* him; which, surely, is not very consistent with their doubting; neither is it very probable that a writer, however illiterate, should mean to contradict himself in the compass of three words. Another interpretation, therefore, though it be not so strictly agreeable to the grammar rules, is to be sought after, since it is a less crime to offend against grammar, than against common sense. *Some doubted*, must mean some besides the eleven, who were present upon that occasion, doubted. And, indeed, had Saint Matthew, in the former part of his narration, taken notice that others besides the eleven were there, there would have been no difficulty in understanding, even according to the strictest laws of the syntax, to whom the *some doubted* did belong; οἱ δὲ, and οἱ δὲ, set in opposition to each other, and signifying *some* and *others*, *these* and *those*, are frequently to be met with in Greek authors of the greatest authority; and no reason can be given why, according to this manner of speaking, the οἱ δὲ ἐνδεκα μαθηταὶ προσεκυνήσαν αὐτῷ — οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν, should not be interpreted *now*, or *then*, the eleven disciples—worshipped him, but others doubted; but that some words, to which the second οἱ δὲ (others) refer, are wanting.

But these defects, how grievous soever they may seem to grammarians, or cavillers, still more scrupulous and more punctilious than grammarians themselves, will by no means impeach the veracity of this evangelist in the opinion of those who, in making a judgment of his writings, are willing to take into the account the purpose he had in composing his gospel. He wrote, as I observed before, at the request of the Jewish converts; who, as Saint Chrysostom informs us,* came to him and besought him to leave in writing, what they had heard from him by word of mouth. His view in writing the gospel therefore to the Jews, was to repeat what he had before preached to them; in doing of which, it was not at all incumbent upon him to relate every minute circumstance, which he could not but know they were well acquainted with, and which the mention of the principal fact could not fail to recall to their memories. Thus, in the two passages above cited, (to confine myself to them,) it was not necessary for him, writing to the Jews, as it was for Saint Mark, who wrote for the Egyptian converts,† to explain the business that carried Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre. It was doubtless known among the Jews that they had bought spices, and went to the sepulchre, in order to embalm the body of Jesus. Neither was it worth while, for the sake of a little grammatical exactness, to interrupt the course of his narration, to acquaint them that Salome joined the two Marys as they were going to the sepulchre, and went with them thither; and that Mary Magdalene, upon seeing the stone rolled away, ran immediately to inform Peter and John of it; especially as he did not think proper to take notice of Christ's having appeared to her; and he seems to me to have mentioned Christ's appearing to the other women, only because it was connected with the principal fact, the story of his appearing in Galilee to the eleven disciples and others. The disciples going to meet their Master on a mountain in Galilee, where he had appointed them, must needs have made a great noise among the Jews; especially as it did not fall out till above a week at least after the resurrection; during which time he had appeared thrice to his disciples, (John, xxi. 14,) not including his appearances to Peter, to the two disciples, and the women. And as above twenty people were witnesses to one or other of these appearances, the fame of them was in all probability diffused, not only through Jerusalem, but throughout all Judea. It is no wonder, therefore, that upon this solemn occasion, which had been notified so long before, not only by an angel at the sepulchre, and by Christ himself on the day of his resurrection, but foretold by him even before his death; it is no wonder, I say, that upon so solemn an occasion, a great multitude besides the eleven should be got together. Saint Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6) mentions an appearance of Christ to above five hundred brethren at once, which cannot, with so good reason, be understood of any other but this in Galilee. And though out of so large an assembly some doubted, as Saint Matthew says, yet that very exception implies, that the greatest number believed; and even those who doubted, must have agreed in some common points with those who believed. They, as well as the eleven, saw Jesus, but not having had the same sensible evidences of the reality of his body, doubted whether it was himself or his appa-

* Τόμον. περὶ Ἐυαγγ.

† Ibid.

rition which they beheld; while the latter, who needed no farther conviction, when they saw him, fell down and worshipped. Here, then, was a fact, which could not in all its circumstances but be very notorious to the Jews, and was therefore highly proper to be mentioned by Saint Matthew. Here was a cloud of witnesses, (1 Cor. xv. 6,) the greatest part of whom were alive when Saint Paul wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians,* and therefore were certainly living when Saint Matthew composed his Gospel; and many of them probably were of the number of those converts for whom he wrote. Upon any of these suppositions, and especially the last, it is easy to account for the concise manner in which he has related this important event. It either was, or might easily be, known, with all its circumstances, by those to whom he addressed his gospel. The little attendant circumstances, therefore, it was as needless for him to mention, as it was proper to take notice of the event itself. The gospel of Christ and the faith of Christians are both vain, if Christ be not risen from the dead. It was therefore absolutely necessary for the apostles and preachers of the gospel to prove the resurrection; this they did, as well by their own testimony, as by that of others, who had seen Jesus after he was risen. Thus Saint Paul relates (1 Cor. xv. 5—8.) several appearances of Christ to Cephas and others, and closes all with his own evidence; adding, "and last of all, he was seen of me also." The evangelists, in like manner, produce many instances of the same nature. Saint Matthew speaks of two, Saint Mark of three, Saint Luke of as many, and Saint John of four; each of them selecting such as best suited with the purpose they had in view when they wrote their gospels. It is evident, at least, that Saint Matthew did so. For in what better manner could he prove to the Jews the resurrection of Christ, than by referring them to the testimony of some hundreds of their own countrymen, who had all seen him after his death, and were so well convinced of the reality of his resurrection, that they believed and embraced his doctrine? This surely was sufficient to convince those who required a number of witnesses; and was, among the Jews at least, the best answer to those who, on the credit of a few Roman soldiers, pretended that the disciples had stolen the body. Upon this fact, therefore, he seems to rest his cause, and with it closes his gospel, adding only the commission given by Christ to the apostles, and consequently to himself as one of them, "to go and teach all nations," and his promise of "being with them always, even unto the end of the world."

* Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians was written A. D. 57. See Mr Locke, ad locum. The Gospel according to Saint Matthew, about the year 53.

Thus, upon the supposition that Saint Matthew wrote his gospel for the Jewish converts, which Saint Chrysostom positively asserts, I have endeavoured to account for some defects and omissions observable in his writings, as also for his having given us the history of the guarding the sepulchre, &c. and of Christ's appearing to the eleven disciples in Galilee, of which the other evangelists make no mention. I shall now make a few remarks upon the particulars related by Saint Mark, and of which no notice is taken by Saint Matthew; but that I may not wander too far from my purpose, I shall confine them to such only as, belonging to the facts related by the latter, and having been mentioned only by the former, have induced some people to charge these two evangelists with contradicting one another. The circumstances, then, that I now intend to consider, are, 1*st*, That of the women's having bought spices, that they might come and anoint the body of Jesus; 2*dly*, That of Salome's being one of those women; and, 3*dly*, That of their entering into the sepulchre, and seeing a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment, and their being affrighted. I have already observed, that Saint Mark wrote his gospel for the use of the Egyptian Christians; some say the Roman, but whether Roman or Egyptian is not material to the present question. It is certain they were Gentiles, and strangers to the Jewish customs and religion, as may be inferred from several little explanatory notes dropt up and down in his gospel. In order, therefore, to give these strangers a perfect intelligence of the fact he thought proper to relate, it was necessary for him to begin his account with that circumstance of the women's having bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus, that they might understand what business carried them so early to the sepulchre, and see, by the preparations made by those women for the embalming the body of Jesus, and the little credit given by the apostles to the reports of those who had seen our Lord on the day of the resurrection, (which he mentions afterwards,) that his rising from the dead was an event not in the least expected by any of them, and not believed by the apostles even after such evidence, as Jesus upbraided them for not assenting to; from all which it was natural for them to conclude, that this fundamental article of their faith was neither received nor preached but upon the fullest conviction of its truth. But of this last point I shall speak more largely hereafter. For his mentioning Salome (which was the second thing proposed to be considered,) no other reason can be given, and no better, I believe, will be required, than that she was there; and as to the third circumstance, namely, that of their entering

into the sepulchre, and seeing an angel there sitting on the right side, &c. I shall shew under the second head, which I come now to consider, that though Saint Mark has been more particular in his relation of it, yet the principal points are implied in the account given by Saint Matthew.

Sect. IV.—The second head contains the circumstances in which these two evangelists agree; and they are these: 1*st*, The women's going to the sepulchre early in the morning on the first day of the week; 2*dly*, Their being told by an angel that Christ was risen, &c. I have nothing to add to the remarks I have already made upon the first; but upon the second I must observe, that the several particulars put into the mouth of this angel at the sepulchre by these two evangelists are precisely the same, except the addition of Peter's name inserted by Saint Mark, doubtless for some particular reason, which it is no wonder we should not be able to discover at this great distance of time. This single variation will not, I presume, be thought sufficient to overturn the conclusion I would draw from the exact agreement of all the other particulars, that the fact related by these two sacred writers is the same; especially if it be considered, that the circumstance of the angel's being within the sepulchre, expressly mentioned by Saint Mark, is so far from being contradicted by Saint Matthew, as some have imagined, that it is plainly implied by these words, "He is not here. Come," (δεῦτε, which might more properly be translated, Come hither,) "see the place where the Lord lay." As is also that other circumstance, of the women's entering into the sepulchre, by the Greek term ἐξελθοῦσαι, which should have been rendered, "they went out," instead of, "they departed," as it is in the parallel passage in Saint Mark; to which let me farther add, that the description of the angel's clothing, which was a long white garment according to Saint Mark, corresponds with the only particular relating to it taken notice of by Saint Matthew, which was its whiteness: "His raiment was white as snow." In the latter, indeed, this angel is also painted with a countenance like lightning, and the keepers are said to have trembled, &c. for fear of him. The purpose of this angel's descending from heaven, seems to have been not only to roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, that the women who were on their way thither might have free entrance into it, but also to fright away the soldiers, who were set to guard it; and who, had they continued there, would certainly not have permitted the disciples of Jesus to have made the necessary inquiries for their conviction, could it be supposed that either they or the women would have attempted to enter into the sepulchre while it was surrounded by a Roman guard. For this end it is not unreasonable to suppose he might not only raise an earthquake, but assume a countenance of terror, and after it was accomplished, put on the milder appearance of a young man, in which form the women, as Saint Mark says, saw him sitting within the sepulchre, on the right side. This supposition, I say, is neither unreasonable nor presumptuous; for, although to argue from the event to the design or intention may, in judging of human affairs, be deceitful or precarious, yet, in the actions of God, the supreme disposer of all events, it is most certain and conclusive. Thus, in the present case, the sudden appearance of an angel from heaven, attended by an earthquake;* his removing by his single strength a stone which, according to Beza's copy of Saint Luke's gospel, twenty men could hardly roll; his taking his station upon it, and from thence, with a countenance like lightning, blazing and flashing amid the darkness of the night, were circumstances so full of terror and amazement, that they could not fail of producing, even in the hearts of Roman soldiers, the consternation mentioned by the evangelist, and driving them from a post which a divinity (for so, according to their way of thinking and speaking, they must have styled the angel) had now taken possession of. A cause so fitted to produce such an effect, is an argument of its being intended to produce it; and the intention being answered by the event, is a sufficient reason for varying afterwards the manner of proceeding. Accordingly, the angel, after he had removed the stone, and frighted away the keepers from the sepulchre, quitted his station on the outside, put off his terrors, and entering into the sepulchre, sat there in the form of a young man, to acquaint the women that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought in the grave, was risen from the dead. That the angel was not seen by the women sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, is evident not only from the silence of all the evangelists, with regard to such an appearance, but also from what has already been observed concerning Mary Magdalene, who, though she saw the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, yet saw no angel, as I shewed above. Besides, had the angel remained sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, with all his terrors about him, he would, in all probability, by frightening away the women and disciples as well as the soldiers, have prevented those visits to the sepulchre, which he came on purpose to facilitate. It was necessary, therefore, either that he should not appear at all to the women, or that he should appear within the sepulchre; and in a form which, although more than human, might, however, not be so terrible as

* See Whiston on the Resurrection, &c. according to Beza, &c.

to deprive them of their senses, and render them incapable of hearing, certainly of remembering, that message which he commanded them to deliver to the disciples; from all which considerations it may fairly be concluded, that the appearance of the angel without the sepulchre, mentioned by Saint Matthew, was to the keepers only; and that, when he was seen by the women, he was within the sepulchre, as Saint Mark expressly says, and as the words above-cited from Saint Matthew strongly imply; so that these two evangelists agree in relating not only the words spoken by the angel, but the principal, and, as it were, characteristical circumstances of the fact, which, from this agreement, I would infer to be one and the same. The like agreement is also to be found in their account of the terror of the women upon seeing the angel, their speedy flight from the sepulchre, and the disorder and confusion which so extraordinary an event occasioned in their minds; a confused and troubled mixture of terror, astonishment, and joy, which, according to Saint Mark, was so great as to prevent their telling what had happened to those they met upon the way; so must we understand, "Neither said they any thing to any man;" for it is not to be imagined that they never opened their lips about it. Their silence, doubtless, ended with the cause of it, namely, their terror and amazement; and these, in all probability, vanished upon their seeing Christ himself, who, as Saint Matthew hath informed us, met them as they were going to tell the disciples the message of the angel, accosted them with an All hail! and bade them dismiss their fears. But of this more hereafter.

Sect. V.—I come now, under the third head, to consider those particulars in which these two evangelists are thought to clash and disagree with each other. But so many of these have been already examined, and, as I hope, reconciled, under the two preceding divisions, that there remains to be discussed in this but one single point, arising from the seeming different accounts of the time when the women came to the sepulchre. Saint Matthew says, that "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulchre, as it began to dawn;" Saint Mark, "They came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun," to which I must add Saint John, who, speaking of the same persons and the same fact, says, they came when it was yet dark. The σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης of the latter, and the τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ of Saint Matthew, that signifying it being yet dark, and this, the day beginning to dawn, will, I believe, without any difficulty, be allowed to denote the same point of time, namely, the ending of the night, and the beginning of the day; the only question therefore is, how this can be reconciled with the time mentioned by Saint Mark, namely, the rising of the sun; but this question, how perplexing soever it may appear at first sight, is easily resolved only by supposing that Saint Matthew, and with him Saint John, speaks of the women's setting out, and Saint Mark of their arrival at the sepulchre. And indeed the order of Saint Matthew's narration requires that his words should be understood to signify the time of their setting out; otherwise, all that is related of the earthquake, the descent of the angel, &c. must be thrown into a parenthesis, which very much disturbs the series of the story, and introduces much greater harshness into the construction than any avoided by it. Nay, for my own part, I confess I can see no harshness in the interpretation now contended for. The Greek word ἦλθε, in Saint Matthew, might as well have been translated *went* as *came*, the verb ἔρχομαι signifying both *to go* and *to come*, and consequently being capable of either sense, according as the context shall require. That in Saint Matthew, as I said before, requires us to take the word ἦλθε in the former for the sake of order, and for another reason which I shall now explain. The principal fact, upon the account of which the whole story of the women's going to the sepulchre seems to have been related, is the resurrection of Christ, and this fact is absolutely without a date, if the words of Saint Matthew are to be understood to denote the time of the women's arrival at the sepulchre. When I say without a date, I mean, that it does not appear from any thing in Saint Matthew or the other evangelists, what hour of that night this great event happened. All the information they give us is, that when the women came to the sepulchre, they were told by angels he was risen; but on the contrary, by understanding Saint Matthew to speak of the time of Mary Magdalene's setting out to take a view of the sepulchre, we have the date of the resurrection settled, and know precisely that Christ rose from the dead between the dawning of the day and the sun-rising. And can any substantial reason be assigned why Saint Matthew, having thought fit to enter into so circumstantial an account of the resurrection, should omit the date of so important a fact; or that, not intending to mark it by mentioning the time of the women's going to the sepulchre, he should place that fact before another, which, in order of time, was prior to it? All these considerations therefore are, in my opinion, powerful arguments for understanding this passage of Saint Matthew in the sense above expressed. About Saint Mark's meaning there is no dispute. He certainly intended to express the time of the women's arrival at the sepulchre. His words cannot be taken in any other sense. Those

of Saint John are limited to the same interpretation with those of Saint Matthew, it having been allowed before that they both speak of the same point of time.

Before I quit the examination of these evangelists, I beg leave to add a few remarks, on occasion of a word made use of in this place both by Mark and John, the explaining of which will set in a proper light some passages, that have not hitherto been brought sufficiently in view. The word I mean is πρωΐ, which, having by our translators been rendered by the English word "early," hath been limited to that sense only; and yet it has a farther signification, and imports not *maturè** only, but *præmaturè, ante constitutum tempus;* not only "early," but "over-early, before the appointed time;" and in this sense I am persuaded it was here used by the evangelists. For had they intended to denote only the time of the women's setting out, and arriving at the sepulchre, the descriptive phrases, "while it was yet dark," and "at the rising of the sun," would have been sufficient, and the more general word "early" absolutely redundant; whereas in the other sense it is very significant, and greatly tends to illustrate and confirm what I hope more fully to make appear by comparing the several parts of this history together, that the women came at different times to the sepulchre, and not all at once, as has been imagined. The business that carried them all thither was to pay their last respects to their deceased master, by embalming his body; for which end they had bought and prepared unguents and spices, but were obliged to defer their pious work by the coming on of the Sabbath, upon which day they rested, says Saint Luke, according to the commandment. On the eve of the Sabbath, therefore, when they parted, and each retired to their several habitations, it is most natural to suppose that they agreed to meet upon a certain hour at the sepulchre; and as the errand upon which they were employed required day light, the hour agreed on in all probability was soon after the rising of the sun; their apprehension of the Jews, as well as their zeal to their master prompting them to take the earliest opportunity. But Mary Magdalene, it seems, whether from a natural eagerness of temper, or a more ardent affection for her Lord, to whom she had the greatest obligations, or from a higher cause, set out together with the other Mary, just as the day began to break, in order to take a view of the sepulchre; and having either called upon Salome, or joined her in the way, came thither together with her, πρωΐ, "early," before the time agreed on. This, in my opinion, is a very natural account of the whole matter, and points out the importance of these remarkable expressions, "went to see the sepulchre," in Saint Matthew, and "who shall roll away the stone for us," in Saint Mark. For, 1*st*, The reason of the two Marys setting out so early is here assigned: they went to take a view of the sepulchre, that is, in general, to see if all things were in the same condition in which they had left them two days before, that if in that interval any thing extraordinary had happened, they might report it to their companions, and in conjunction with them take their measures accordingly. Hence is it also evident, in the second place, why they were so few in number; they came to view the sepulchre, and came before the time appointed for their meeting. 2*dly*, As upon the present supposition there were but three women, who came first to the sepulchre, their design in coming so early could be no other than that expressed by Saint Matthew; for they knew that they themselves were not able to roll away the stone, which two of them at least (the two Marys) had seen placed there by Joseph of Arimathea, Mark, xv. 47, and which they knew could not be removed without a greater number of hands. Accordingly, "as they drew near, they said among themselves, Who shall roll away the stone for us, from the door of the sepulchre?" These words intimate that one of their chief views in coming to see the sepulchre was to survey this stone, which closed up the entrance into it, and to consider whether they and the other women, who were to meet them there, were by themselves able to remove it; or whether they must have recourse to the assistance of others. For, "Who shall roll away the stone for us?" implies a sense of their own inability, and of the necessity of calling in others; after which the only thing to be considered was whom and how many? This therefore was the point under deliberation when they approached the sepulchre. 3*dly*, It is also plain from these words, that they did not expect to find any body there, and consequently that they knew nothing of the guard, which the high priest had set to watch the sepulchre; of which, had they received any intelligence, they would hardly have ventured to come at all, or would not have deliberated about rolling away the stone, as the only or greatest difficulty.

* Vid. Scapulæ Lexicon.

Sect. VI.—Luke, xxiv. 1—12. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid, and

bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

In this relation of Saint Luke's are many particulars that differ greatly from those mentioned by the other evangelists. For, 1*st*, The women entering into the sepulchre see neither angel nor angels: and, 2*dly*, Not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they fall into great perplexity. 3*dly*, In the midst of this perplexity there sood by them two men in shining garments; who, 4*thly*, Say to them words very different from those spoken by the angel in Saint Matthew and Saint Mark. 5*thly*, When those women return from the sepulchre, and tell all these things unto the eleven and all the rest, Saint Peter is made to be present, and upon their report to rise immediately and run to the sepulchre, &c. These marks of difference, one would imagine, were sufficient to keep any one from confounding the stories above cited of Joanna and Saint Peter, with those concerning the Marys and that disciple related in the other gospels; especially as they have been observed and acknowledged as well by the Christian as the infidel; the latter of whom hath produced them to support the charge of inconsistency and contradiction, which he hath endeavoured to fix upon the sacred writers; while the former, seduced and dazzled by some few points of resemblance, hath agreed with him in allowing these different facts to be the same; but denying his conclusion, hath laboured to reconcile the inconsistencies, by rules and methods of interpretation which, as they are strained and unnatural, tend only to discover the greatness of his embarrassment. Whereas the true way, in my opinion, of answering this charge, is to shew that it is founded upon a mistake, by shewing that the evangelists relate different, but not inconsistent facts; and that instead of clashing and disagreeing, they mutually confirm, illustrate, and support each other's evidence. This therefore I shall now endeavour to do, by making a few remarks upon the several articles above mentioned. I shall begin with that relating to Saint Peter, because the settling of that will settle many other points. "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." This fact has always been taken to be the same with that related by Saint John, from which, however, it differs, among other things, in this very material circumstance, namely, That whereas Saint John expressly says, that Peter went into the sepulchre, while he (John) who got thither first, contented himself with barely stooping down, and looking into it, Saint Luke, in the passage before us, tells us, that Peter stooping down, and looking in, beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed. The word παρακύψας (stooping down and looking in) used by both evangelists, and in the latter applied only to Saint Peter, in the former only to Saint John, is in his gospel plainly distinguished from the word εισῆλθεν (entered in) and set in direct opposition to it; and that not by the force of etymology and construction only, but by some particulars resulting from the actions signified by those two words, which prove them to be distinct and different from each other. He who went into the sepulchre, saw more than he who, staying without, only stooped down and looked in. Thus Peter and John, when they entered into the sepulchre, saw not only the linen clothes lie, but the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself; but when they only stooped down and looked in, they could see only the linen clothes, as is evident from the words of Saint John; the whole passage runs thus, "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre, and the other disciple, did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre, and he stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, and saw," &c. Now these two actions being by these marks as clearly distinguished from each other in Saint John, as the different places where they were performed can be by the terms entrance, and inside of the sepulchre, and as so distinguished having been separately performed by that apostle, they must also necessarily be taken for separate and distinct actions, when related of Saint Peter. And if it be reasonable to conclude from Saint John's account that Peter, when he came with him to the sepulchre, did

not stop at the entrance, "stoop down and look in," but that he entered into it; it is no less reasonable to conclude from Saint Luke's narration, that when he came, at the time mentioned by him, he did not enter in, but stooping down, beheld the linen clothes and departed, especially if the force of the Greek word μόνα be considered, and the whole passage rendered, as it ought to have been, beheld the linen clothes only lying, τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα μόνα. From all which it evidently follows, that the fact here related of Saint Peter, and that related of him by Saint John, are separate and distinct facts, and not one and the same, as has been imagined. And as the facts were different, so did they take their rise from two different occasions: or, in other words, as it is evident, from all that has been just now said, that Peter went twice to the sepulchre, so are there two distinct reasons for his so doing assigned in the gospels of Luke and John, namely, the report of Mary Magdalene, and that of Joanna and the other women. By the former having been told that the body of Jesus was taken out of the sepulchre, he ran in great haste to examine into the truth of that account, and in pursuance of this intent entered into the sepulchre, that he might receive a thorough satisfaction upon that point. In the latter were two additional circumstances of importance sufficient to awaken the curiosity of a less zealous disciple than Saint Peter, whose affection for his Lord was like his natural temper, fervent and impetuous. When he heard therefore from Joanna and the other women of a vision of angels, who had appeared to them at the sepulchre, and informed them that Christ was risen, can we wonder at his running thither a second time, in hopes of receiving some confirmation of the truth of that report which, though treated by the rest of the apostles as an idle tale, he certainly gave credit to, as the whole tenor of this passage implies? I say a second time, because had he gone for the first time, upon this report of Joanna's, he could have had no inducement to have gone to the sepulchre a second time from any thing he could learn from the first report made by Mary Magdalene, whose account contained nothing but what was implied in that given by Joanna and the other women. His behaviour also upon this occasion, when he only stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, so different from the former, when he entered into it, is very rational, and consonant with the purpose of this second visit, which was, to see if the angels who had appeared to the women at the sepulchre were still there; this could as well be discovered by looking, as by going, into the sepulchre, as is plain from the story of Mary Magdalene, who, stooping down and looking in, saw two angels sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain, as Saint John tells us.

Having now, as I hope, proved that this visit of Saint Peter's to the sepulchre, mentioned by Saint Luke, must have been his second visit, I have cleared this passage from two objections that lay against it: one, that it did not agree with the relation given by Saint John; and the other, that it disturbed and confounded the whole order of Saint Luke's narration: So that, notwithstanding this verse is wanting both in the Greek and Latin copies of Beza, there is no reason for rejecting it, as some have proposed.

This point being settled, I beg leave to make a few inferences from it, in order to explain some passages in the preceding verses of this chapter.

First then, It is plain from this and the ninth verse, that Saint Peter, after he had been with Saint John and Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, was now got together with the other apostles and disciples, whom in all probability he and John had assembled upon the occasion of Mary Magdalene's report. Peter, I say, and John, had in all probability assembled the other disciples and apostles to inform them of what they had heard from Mary Magdalene, and of their having been themselves at the sepulchre to examine into the truth of her report. For it is not to be imagined, that these apostles would not have immediately communicated to the rest an event of so much consequence to them all, as that of the Lord's body being missing from the sepulchre. And as we now find them gathered together, and Peter with them, it is no unnatural supposition that they had been summoned thither by John and Peter. At least, their meeting together so early in the morning is this way accounted for. Here then we see the reason of Saint Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary among those which told these things to the apostles. For although these two women were not with Joanna and her set, and consequently could not have joined with them in relating to the apostles the vision of the two angels, &c. yet, as the account of their having found the stone rolled away, and the body of Jesus missing, had been reported from them by Peter and John to the other apostles, before the return of Joanna from the sepulchre, Saint Luke thought fit to set them down as evidences of some of the facts related by him; and indeed it was very proper to produce the testimony of the two Marys concerning the stone's being rolled away, and the body gone, because they first went to the sepulchre, and first gave an account of those two particulars to the apostles. I here join the other Mary with Mary Magdalene; for though I think it is pretty plain from Saint John, that she alone brought this account,

yet it is remarkable, that in her narration she says, "*We* know not where they have laid him," speaking, as it were, in the name of the other Mary and her own; and doubtless she did not omit to acquaint them that the other Mary came with her to the sepulchre; so that this report, though made by Mary Magdalene alone, may fairly be taken for the joint report of the two Marys, and was probably styled so by Peter and John, and, therefore, represented as such by Saint Luke in the passage before us.

Secondly, From hence also I infer, that the reports of the women were made separately, and at different times. For if Peter went twice to the sepulchre, there must have been two distinct reasons for his so doing, which reasons I have shewn to be the reports of Mary Magdalene and Joanna. And as there was a considerable interval between his first and second visit, a proportionable space of time must have intervened between the two reports. After Mary Magdalene's he had been at the sepulchre, had returned from thence to his own home, and was now got with the other apostles and disciples, whom, as I said, he and John had in all probability called together, before Joanna and the women with her came to make theirs.

Thirdly, As the reports were made at different times, and by different women; as the facts reported were different, and said to have happened all in the same place, namely, at the sepulchre; and as these facts must of consequence have happened at different times; it follows, that the women, who reported those facts as happening in their presence, must have been at the sepulchre at different times. For had they been all present at each of these events, no reason can be given for their differing so widely in their relations, and pretty difficult will it be to account for their varying so much as to the time of making their reports. Here then is a strong argument in favour of what I have before advanced concerning the women's coming at different times to the sepulchre, and particularly about the Marys coming thither earlier than the rest. The reason for their so doing I have already pointed out in my observations upon Saint Mark, and have shewn, that upon the supposition of that reason's being the true one, their whole conduct was proper and consistent; which leads me to consider that of Joanna and the other women, who came somewhat later, and with another purpose, to the sepulchre. The former came to take a view or survey of the sepulchre, as Saint Matthew expressly says; the latter came to embalm or anoint the Lord's body, and for that end not only brought the spices which they had prepared, but were also accompanied by other women. Other women must mean some besides those who followed Jesus from Galilee, of whom alone Saint Luke speaks in the former part of this verse, and the latter part of the preceding chapter. By these, therefore, as contradistinguished from the Galilean women, he probably means the women of Jerusalem, a great company of whom followed Jesus as he was going to his crucifixion, bewailing and lamenting him. [See the 27th verse of the preceding chapter.] But what number of them went upon this occasion with the women of Galilee, is not any where said; neither of these are any named besides Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, though many others followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, as both Saint Matthew (xxvii. 55) and Saint Mark (xv. 41) inform us, and were present at the crucifixion. It is therefore very probable that most, if not all of those who were wont to minister to him in Galilee, who attended him to Jerusalem, and accompanied him even to Mount Calvary, contributed to this pious office of embalming their Master's body, either by buying and preparing the unguents and spices, and carrying them to the sepulchre, or by going to assist their companions in embalming the body and rolling away the stone; for which purpose I suppose the women of Jerusalem principally attended, since none of them seem to have made any purchase of spices for embalming the body; and for this last purpose it is farther probable they thought their numbers sufficient. Accordingly, we do not find them saying among themselves, "Who shall roll away the stone for us," as the Marys did; nor do we find the Marys bringing the spices which they had bought, as is here related of Joanna and those with her; and, doubtless, the evangelists had a meaning in their use and application of these expressions, the former of which is very agreeable to the purpose that carried the Marys so early to the sepulchre, as is the latter to that of Joanna, who, coming to embalm the body, brought with her all that was necessary for performing that business,—namely, the spices, and other women to assist her in rolling away the stone, &c. The different conduct of the women, therefore, indicates their several purposes in going to the sepulchre, and tends to confirm what I have been all along labouring to prove, that they went thither at different times, and not all together.

And as their having had different motives was the cause of their going at different times, and dividing themselves into different companies, so from their coming to the sepulchre in different bodies, sprang a subdivision of one of those companies, which I shall now explain. The two Marys and Salome came first to the sepulchre, and as they drew near, lifting up their eyes, perceived that the stone,

which was very great, was rolled away from the entrance: upon sight of which Mary Magdalene, concluding that the body of Jesus was taken away, ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with it, leaving her two companions at the sepulchre. That she was alone when she came to those two apostles, is strongly implied by the whole tenor of that passage in Saint John, where this fact is related, as I have already observed; and that she left her companions at the sepulchre, is as evident from what Saint Mark says of their entering into the sepulchre, &c. The reason of which probably was this, she knew that Joanna and her company would not be long before they came thither, and might therefore think it proper to desire the other Mary and Salome to wait for them there, to inform them that they had found the stone rolled away, &c. and that she was gone to acquaint Peter and John with it. But whether this, or any other reason was the cause of Mary Magdalene's going by herself to Peter and John, and the other two women's staying behind at the sepulchre, is not very material to inquire; all I contend for is, that so it was; and that hence arose a subdivision of this company, that gave occasion to two appearances of angels, and as many of Christ, and consequently multiplied the proofs and witnesses of the resurrection.

I hope by this time it is sufficiently evident, that the facts related by the several women to the apostles were different and distinct facts; and, therefore, I think it unnecessary to enter into any farther argument upon that point. And although, in the beginning of my observations upon this chapter of Saint Luke, I noted some particulars wherein this story of Joanna differs from that of the other women, and promised to make some remarks upon them; yet, for the last mentioned reason, I dare say I shall be easily acquitted of my promise, especially as those marks of difference are so obvious and striking, that little more need be done than pointing them out to observation. I must, however, beg leave to observe, that the position relating to the angels appearing and disappearing as they thought proper, laid down in my remarks upon Saint John, is farther proved by the manner of their appearing mentioned here in Saint Luke, which is implied to have been sudden, not only by the force and import of the expression, but by the remarkable circumstance of their not being seen by the women, at their entering into the sepulchre.

Sect. VII.—Though the following passage of this chapter relating to Christ's appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus hath been already produced in part, yet I think it proper to insert it entire in this place, that by the reader's having it all before him at once, he may be the better able to judge of the observation I intend to make upon it.

Luke, xxiv. 13—35. "And behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all those things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

Whoever reads this story over with any degree of attention, and considers the subject of the conversation which our Saviour held with the two disciples upon the road to Emmaus, will perceive that it must have arisen from what the angels had said to the women related in the preceding verses of this chapter. To set this matter in the clearest light, we will put the several parts together. The angels said to the women who came to embalm the body of Jesus, "He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." The words of our Saviour referred to by the angels are these, (Luke, xviii. 31—33,) "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again." The words of the angels these two disciples had heard from the women, before they left Jerusalem; and as they were walking towards Emmaus, and talking over all the wonderful things that had come to pass, they seem at last to have fallen into a debate upon the subject of these words, and the prophecies referred to by them, just as our Saviour drew near. That they were engaged in some argument or disquisition, I infer not only from the Greek word συζητεῖν, which signifies to discuss, examine, or inquire together; but from our Saviour's question, who apparently having overheard some part of their discourse, asks them, Τινες οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι οὓς ἀντιβάλλετε πρὸς ἀλλήλους; "What arguments are these, that ye are debating one with another, while ye walk and are sad?" The subject of their argument appears in their answer to this question, in which they give him to understand that they were reasoning upon the things that had come to pass concerning Jesus of Nazareth, "whom," say they, alluding plainly to the words of the angels, "the chief priests and our rulers have delivered to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. And hence arises all our sadness, for we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and over and above all these things, to-day is the third day since these things were done," (another allusion to the words of the angels;) "and to-day some women of our company astonished us with an account of their having been early at the sepulchre, and, not finding the body of Jesus, had been there told by angels that he was risen from the dead. And some of our companions, running immediately to the sepulchre, found the report of the women to be true; but him they saw not." The sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Jesus were the subjects of their debates, foretold, as the angels bade them remember, out of the prophets, by Christ himself; and the scope of their inquiry was, how to reconcile these events with the prophecies to which they were referred. Part of them they had seen accomplished in the sufferings and death of Christ; and that ought to have assured them of the accomplishment of the other part: but either from not understanding, or from a backwardness in believing all that the prophets had said, they stopped short of this conclusion. For this ignorance and backwardness Christ reproves them; asks them whether (according to the prophets) "Christ ought not to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" that is, to rise again; and then "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounds to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." The connection is visible: at the beginning of the chapter the angels refer the disciples for the proof of the resurrection to the prophets; and here, Christ joining two of those disciples on the road, is, by their discourse upon that subject, led to explain those prophecies, and prove from them that the Messiah was certainly risen from the dead. And in the like manner is the remaining part of this chapter to the 46th verse, connected with this and the preceding. For these two disciples, returning to Jerusalem, relate to the apostles and the rest, whom they found gathered together, what had passed between Christ and them upon the road to Emmaus; and while they were speaking Christ himself appears, and, after having given them sensible proofs of his being risen from the dead, reminds them, as the angel had done, of the words which he spake unto them in Galilee, saying, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."

The connection and dependence of the several parts of this chapter upon each other, point out to us the reason that induced Saint Luke to relate the vision of the two angels to Joanna and the other women; and at the same time prove that vision to be distinct and different from those seen by the Marys: each of which had, in like manner, its separate and peculiar reference to other facts, as will presently be seen.

Sect. VIII. I shall now proceed to consider the appearances of Christ to the women, on

the day of his resurrection ; which, like those of the angels, have also been confounded, and from the same cause, namely, from the want of attending with due care to the several circumstances, by which they are plainly distinguished from each other. And, 1*st*, I observe, that these appearances of Christ are so connected with the appearances of the angels, that these having been proved to be distinct, it follows that those are distinct also. 2*dly*, Saint Mark expressly tells us, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which, according to all propriety of speech, implies that she was alone at the time of that appearance, as I have said once before. But I think it best to set down the passages themselves, of Saint John and Saint Matthew, in which these appearances are related. John, xx. 11—18, " But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping ; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain ; and they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had said thus, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ? Whom seekest thou ? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary ! She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father : but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her." Matt. xxviii. 9, 10, " And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail ! And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid : Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

After having produced these two passages, it would be wasting both time and words to go about to prove the appearances therein mentioned to be different. Compare them, and you will find they disagree in every circumstance ; in the place, the persons, the actions, and the words : of which last I must observe, that they refer to two different events, namely, the ascension of Christ into heaven, and his meeting his disciples in Galilee, of which they were prophecies, and by which they, and consequently these appearances of Christ, were not long after verified, though discredited at first, and treated as idle tales.

I have now gone over the several particulars of the history of the resurrection related in the four evangelists, have examined them with all the attention I am capable of, and with a sincere desire of discovering and embracing the truth ; and have, as I think, made out the following points, 1*st*, That the women came at different times, and in different companies, to the sepulchre. 2*dly*, That there were several distinct appearances of angels. 3*dly*, That the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they thought proper. 4*thly*, That these several facts were reported to the apostles at different times, and by different women. 5*thly*, That there were two distinct appearances of Christ to the women. And, 6*thly*, That Saint Peter was twice at the sepulchre. These points being once established, all the objections against this part of the gospel history, as contradictory and inconsistent, entirely vanish and come to nought. That very learned and ingenious men have been embarrassed by these objections, is some excuse for those who first started them, and those who have lately insisted upon them. Their having now received an answer, (if that will be allowed), is a clear proof that it was always possible to answer them, even with a very moderate share of common sense and learning. The nature of the answer itself, which is founded upon the usual, obvious, plain sense of the words, without putting any force, either upon the particular expressions, or the general construction of the several passages, is an evidence of what I now say. So that I must needs acknowledge that its having been so long missed, is matter of far greater surprise, than its having been hit upon now.

I shall here beg leave to subjoin a few observations of a very eminent and judicious person, to whose inspection I submitted these papers ; and in whose approbation of them I have great reason to pride myself. They are as follows :—

" To prove the appearances at the sepulchre to be different, and made to different persons, two things concur.

" I. The several accounts as given by the evangelists.

" II. The circumstances which attended the case.

" The first point is fully considered ; and of the second it is very justly remarked, that the women having agreed to be early at the sepulchre, it fell out naturally, 'that some came before others.' Now there being at the place of meeting something to terrify them as fast as they arrived, it accounts also for their dispersion, and their not meeting at all in one body. It may help likewise to account for the manner of delivering their messages

to the apostles; supposing the messages not delivered in the same order, in point of time, as the appearances happened. For the most terrified might be the latest reporters, though they received their orders first. Which observation is favoured by Saint Mark's *οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπον*, 'neither said they any thing to any man.'

"The difficulty upon stating the appearances to be different, and made to different persons, arises chiefly from Mary Magdalene being mentioned as present by every evangelist: but there seems to be this reason for it; she was at the head of the women, and the chief of those who attended our Lord, and followed him from Galilee; and 'Mary Magdalene and the women with her,' denotes the women who came from Galilee, in the same manner that the eleven denotes the apostles.

"Three evangelists say expressly that many women were present at the crucifixion: had it been left so generally, we should have had no account who they were. Therefore Saint Matthew, xxvii. 56, adds, *ἐν αἷς ἦν*, 'among whom was Mary Magdalene,' &c. So it is again, Mark, xv. 40. Saint Luke having said, in general terms, that the women, who followed from Galilee, were spectators of the crucifixion, goes on with the account, (xxiv. 1,) of their coming to the sepulchre, seeing angels, and returning to tell the eleven and all the rest. But to give credit to their report, and to correct the omission in not describing them before, he tells us who they were. And how does he describe them? Why, by saying they were of the company of Mary Magdalene: *Ἦσαν δὲ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ*, &c. xxiv. 10, which verse admits, perhaps requires, a different reading from that in our translation.

"These considerations seem to account for her being mentioned in the transactions of these women, though not always present herself. Saint Luke says, (xxiv. 1,) that besides the women from Galilee, there were other women there. To distinguish those, who made the report to the disciples, from the other women, he adds the words already referred to.*

"It is remarkable that Saint Mark says of the women mentioned by him, no more than that they had bought spices to anoint the body; enough to shew with what intent they went to the tomb; that they had any spices with them he does not say. But Saint Luke says of those he mentions, that they actually brought with them the spices; and not only so, but that they had prepared them; that is, made them fit for the use intended. The several drugs were bought singly, each by itself at the shop, and were necessarily to be mixed, or melted together for use: and I imagine that, though all the women joined in buying the spices, yet the care of getting and preparing them was left particularly to the women mentioned by Saint Luke; and as they were Galileans, and not at home at Jerusalem, and probably unacquainted with the method of embalming bodies, that they employed some inhabitants of the place to buy and prepare the spices, and to go with them to apply them to the body; and these are the *τινες σὺν αὐταῖς*, others with them, in Saint Luke.

"This will account for Saint Matthew saying nothing of spices — for they had none with them. They set out before those, who were to bring the spices, to see what condition the sepulchre was in; and their business is properly expressed by *θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον*, 'to see the sepulchre.'

"Mary Magdalene was with the first (Matt. and Mark) who went to the sepulchre; but I think she did not go to the sepulchre then: as soon as she was in sight of the place, lifting up her eyes (*ἀναβλέψασα*, Mark, xvi. 4,) and seeing the stone removed, she turned instantly (*τρέχει οὖν*, John, xx. 2,) to tell Peter and John. And it is plain by her behaviour at her second going, that she had no share in the fright that seized those who went on after she left them."

SECT. IX. — Having thus cleared the way, I shall now set down the several incidents of this wonderful event, in the order in which, according to the foregoing observations, they

* The words of Saint Luke deserves a particular examination; they run thus in the Greek: — *Καὶ ὑποστρέψασαι ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου ἀπήγγειλαν ταῦτα πάντα τοῖς ἕνδεκα καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς λοιποῖς· Ἦσαν δὲ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ Μαρία καὶ Ἰωάννα καὶ Μαρία Ἰακώβου, καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ σὺν αὐταῖς, αἱ ἔλεγον πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ταῦτα.* In English, "And turning back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. Now, they who related these things to the apostles, were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the rest with them, that is, of their company." As the account of the proceedings of the Galilean women begins in the foregoing chapter, and is carried on without any interruption to the 9th verse of this chapter; so that the several verbs occurring in this and the preceding verses are all governed by the same nominative case, namely, *γυναῖκες*; in verse 55 of the 23d chapter, it is evident that *ταῦτα πάντα*, all these things, must be taken to extend to all the particulars mentioned in that account, and cannot be confined to the transactions of the sepulchre only; and the same observation holds equally to the *ταῦτα* in the following verse. The utmost, therefore, that can be inferred from Saint Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, is, that they were concerned in some or other of these transactions, and joined in relating some of these things to the apostles; which is true, for they sat over against the sepulchre, when Joseph laid in it the body of the Lord, Matt. xxvii. 61. "And beheld where he was laid," Mark, xv. 47. They also "had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him," Mark, xvi. 1. And were the first who came to the sepulchre that morning, and brought the first account of the body's being missing, Matt. and Mark. And though by comparing the accounts given by the other evangelists with this of Saint Luke, it appears that neither of these women went with Joanna and her company to the sepulchre, yet as they were Galilean women, and bore a part, and a principal part too, in what the women of Galilee were then chiefly employed about, namely, the care of embalming the body of Jesus, there is certainly no impropriety in Saint Luke's naming them with Joanna and the rest, as he does in the end of the general and collective account he gives of what was reported and done by the Galilean women. Neither does his naming them appropriate to them any particular part of that general account, any more than his not naming them would have excluded them from their share of those transactions, and the report then made to the apostles. In this case they would have been included in the general terms of Galilean women; as by being named, they are distinguished and marked as the most eminent persons and leaders of that company of women who followed Jesus from Galilee, &c.

seem to have arisen; after premising that our Saviour Christ was crucified on a Friday, (the preparation, or the day before the Jewish Sabbath,) gave up the ghost about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, and was buried that evening, before the commencement of the Sabbath, which among the Jews was always reckoned to begin from the first appearance of the stars on Friday evening, and to end at the appearance of them again on the day we call Saturday. That some time, and most probably towards the close of the Sabbath, after the religious duties of the day were over, the chief priests obtained of Pilate, the Roman governor, a guard to watch the sepulchre, till the third day was past, pretending to apprehend that his disciples might come by night, and steal away the body, and then give out that he was risen, according to what he himself had predicted while he was yet alive: that they did accordingly set a guard, made sure the sepulchre, and to prevent the soldiers themselves from concurring with the disciples, they put a seal upon the stone which closed up the entrance of the sepulchre.

The order I conceive to have been as follows:—

Very early on the first day of the week, (the day immediately following the Sabbath, and the third from the death of Christ,) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, in pursuance of the design of embalming the Lord's body, which they had concerted with the other women, who attended him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and for the performing of which they had prepared unguents and spices, set out, in order to take a view of the sepulchre, just as the day began to break: and about the time of their setting out, "there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it: his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men," during whose amazement and terror Christ came out of the sepulchre; and the keepers being now recovered out of their trance, and fled, the angel, who till then sat upon the stone, quitted his station on the outside, and entered into the sepulchre, and probably disposed the linen clothes and napkin in that order, in which they were afterwards found and observed by John and Peter. Mary Magdalene, in the mean while, and the other Mary, were still on their way to the sepulchre, where, together with Salome, (whom they had either called upon or met as they were going,) they arrived at the rising of the sun. And as they drew near, discoursing about the method of putting their intent of embalming the body of their Master in execution, "they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? for it was very great;" and they themselves (the two Marys at least) had seen it placed there two days before, and seen with what difficulty it was done. But in the midst of their deliberation about removing this great and sole obstacle to their design, (for it does not appear that they knew any thing of the guard,) lifting up their eyes, while they were yet at some distance, they perceived it was already rolled away. Alarmed at so extraordinary and so unexpected a circumstance, Mary Magdalene, concluding, that, as the stone could not be moved without a great number of hands, so it was not rolled away without some design; and that they who rolled it away could have no other design but to remove the Lord's body; and being convinced by appearances that they had done so, ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with what she had seen and what she suspected, leaving Mary and Salome there, that if Joanna and the other women should come in the mean time, they might acquaint them with their surprise at finding the stone removed, and the body gone, and of Mary Magdalene's running to inform the two above-mentioned apostles of it. While she was going on this errand, Mary and Salome went on, and entered into the sepulchre, "and there saw an angel sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified: He is risen, he is not here: Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed; neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid." After the departure of Mary and Salome, came John and Peter, who, having been informed by Mary Magdalene, that the body of the Lord was taken away out of the sepulchre, and that she knew not where they had laid him, "ran both together to the sepulchre; and the other disciple [John] outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; and he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed;* for as yet they knew not the

* *Believed.*] Commentators have generally agreed to understand by this word no more than that Saint John believed what Mary Magdalene suggested, namely, that they had taken away

Scripture that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; and they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary! She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni! which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." After this appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene, to whom Saint Mark says expressly he appeared first, the other Mary and Salome, who had fled from the sepulchre in such terror and amazement that they said not any thing to any man, (that is, as I understand, had not told the message of the angel to some* whom they met, and to whom they were directed to deliver it,) were met on their way by Jesus Christ himself, who said to them, "All hail! and they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid, go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me." These several women and the two apostles being now gone from the sepulchre, Joanna, with the other Galilean women, "and others with them, came bringing the spices which they had prepared for the embalming the body of Jesus, and finding the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, they entered in, but not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they were much perplexed thereabout, and behold two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." But Peter, who upon the report of Mary Magdalene had been at the sepulchre, had entered into it, and with a curiosity that bespoke an expectation of something extraordinary, and a desire of being satisfied, had observed that the linen clothes, in which Christ was buried, and the napkin that was about his head, were not only left in the sepulchre, but carefully wrapped up, and laid in several places; and who from thence might begin to suspect, what his companion Saint John from those very circumstances seems to have believed: Peter, I say, hearing from Joanna, that she had seen a vision of angels at the sepulchre, who had assured her that Christ was risen, starting up, ran thither immediately, and knowing that the angels, if they were within the sepulchre, might be discovered without his going in, he did not, as before, enter in, but stooping down looked so far in as to see the "linen clothes, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." And either with Peter, or about that time, went some other disciples, who were present when Joanna, and the other women made their report, "and found it even so as the women had said. The same day two of the disciples went to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all those things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications (arguments) are these that you have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a

the Lord's body; and they seem to have been led into this opinion by the words immediately subjoined, "for as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead," which words contain a sort of an excuse for their not believing that he was risen. It is, however, certain, that by the word *believe*, when it is put absolutely, the sacred writers most commonly mean to have, what is called, faith; and in this sense it is used no less than three times in the latter part of this chapter. To obviate this objection, retain the usual signification of this verb, and yet reconcile this verse with the following, it is pretended that Beza's old Greek manuscript says, he did not believe, that is, instead of ἐπίστευσεν, it has οὐκ ἐπίστευσεν or ἠπίστουσεν. Instead of entering into an examination which of these two readings is to be preferred, I shall only observe, that Beza himself, in his comments upon this passage, takes no notice of the various reading above mentioned; on the contrary, he contends that Saint John did believe the resurrection. These are his words,—"Et credidit καὶ ἐπίστευσεν, Christum videlicet resurrexisse, quanquam tenuis adhuc foret hæc fides, et aliis testimoniis egeret, quibus confirmaretur. Joannes igitur solus jam tum hoc credidit," &c. See his Greek Testament in folio, printed at Geneva, A. D. 1598. And I own I am most inclined to his opinion, for reasons which will appear in the course of this work.

* Probably John and Peter, who were running with Mary Magdalene to the sepulchre, about the time that these women were flying from it, might have been discerned by them at a distance, though the terror they were in might occasion their not recollecting them immediately. But of this I shall hereafter say something more.

prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: And besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

This is the order in which the several incidents above related appear to have arisen; the conformity of which with the words of the evangelists, interpreted in their obvious and most natural sense, I have shewn in my remarks upon the passages wherein they are contained: And although the reasons there given are, as I apprehend, sufficient of themselves to justify the exposition I contend for, yet, for the better confirmation of what has been advanced, I beg leave to lay before you an observation or two, suggested by this very order itself, from whence its aptness and tendency to the great end, to which it was in in all its parts directed and disposed by the hand of Providence, namely, the proof of the resurrection of Christ, will manifestly appear.

Sect. X. First then, by this order, in which all the different events naturally and easily follow, and as it were rise out of one another, the narration of the evangelists is cleared from all confusion and inconsistencies. And 2dly, The proof of the resurrection is better established by thus separating the women into two or more divisions, than upon the contrary supposition, which brings them all together to the sepulchre; for in the last case, instead of three different appearances of angels to the women, and two of Jesus Christ, we should have but one of each; whereas in the former there is a train of witnesses, a succession of miraculous events, mutually strengthening and illustrating each other, and equally and jointly concurring to prove one and the same fact; a fact, which, as it was in its own nature most astonishing, and in its consequences of the utmost importance to mankind, required the fullest and most unexceptionable evidence. And I will venture to say, never was a fact more fully proved; as I doubt not to make appear to any one, who with me will consider, 1*st*, the manner; 2*dly*, the matter of the evidence; and 3*dly*, the characters and dispositions of the persons whom it was intended to convince. By these I chiefly mean the apostles, and disciples of Jesus, who were to be the witnesses of the resurrection to all the world. By the manner, I understand the method and order in which the several proofs were laid before them: and by the matter, the several facts of which the evidence consisted.

I shall begin with the apostles and disciples, for whose conviction the miraculous appearances of the angels, and of Christ himself to the women, were principally designed; and the knowledge of whose general characters, as well as of the particular disposition of their minds at that time, will throw a light upon the other points proposed to be considered.

The greatest part, if not all, of the apostles and disciples of Jesus—those, at least, who openly and avowedly followed him—were men of low birth, and mean occupations, illiterate, unaccustomed to deep inquiries and abstracted reasonings; men of gross minds, contracted notions, and strongly possessed with the selfish, carnal, and national prejudices of the Jewish religion, as it was then taught by the scribes and pharisees. And hence, although it is evident from several passages in the gospel history, that, convinced by the many miracles performed by Jesus of Nazareth, and the accomplishments of many prophecies in him, they believed him to be the Messiah, yet their idea of a Messiah was the same with that of their brethren the Jews; who, by not rightly understanding the true meaning of some prophecies, expected to find in the Messiah a temporal prince, a redeemer and ruler of Israel, who should never die. And so deeply was this prejudice rooted in the minds of the apostles, as well

as the rest of the Jews, that although our Saviour constantly disclaimed the character of a temporal prince, and upon many occasions endeavoured to undeceive his disciples, yet they could not wholly give up their opinion, even after they had seen him risen from the dead, and received that incontestable proof of his being the Messiah, and of their having mistaken the sense of the prophecy about his being never to die. For in one of his conferences with them after his resurrection, they ask him, Whether he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel? (Acts, i. 6.) with so much obstinacy did they adhere to their former prejudices. This, therefore, being their settled notion of the Messiah, can we wonder their former faith in him should be extinguished, when they saw him suffering, crucified, and dying; and instead of saving others, not able to save himself? To prepare them for these events, he had indeed most circumstantially foretold his own sufferings, death, and resurrection: but the apostles themselves assure us that they did not understand those predictions, till some time after their accomplishment; and they made this confession at a time, when they were as sensible of their former dulness, and undoubtedly as much amazed at it, as they now pretend to be, who object it against them; so that their veracity upon this point is not to be questioned. Immortality, therefore, and temporal dominion being, in their opinion, the characteristics of the Messiah, the sufferings and death of Jesus must have convinced them before his resurrection that he was not the Messiah, not that person in whom they had trusted as the redeemer and king of Israel. And having, as they imagined, found themselves mistaken in their faith as to this point, they might, with some colour of reason, be cautious and backward in believing any predictions about his rising again from the dead, had they understood what those predictions meant. The state of mind, therefore, into which the apostles fell on the death of their master, must have been a state of perplexity and confusion,—they could not but reflect upon his miraculous works, and his more miraculous holiness of life, and were not able to account for the ignominious death of so extraordinary a person: A state of dejection and despair,—they had conceived great expectations from the persuasion that he was the Christ of God; but these were all vanished: their promised Deliverer, their expected King, was dead and buried, and no one left to call him from the grave as he did Lazarus. With his life, they might presume, ended his power of working miracles, and death perhaps was an enemy he could not subdue, since it was apparent he could not escape it; and hence proceeded their despair. It was likewise a state of anxiety and terror,—the Jews had just put their master to death as a malefactor and impostor; what then could his followers expect from his inveterate and triumphant enemies, but insults, and reproaches, and ignominy, scourges, chains, and death? The fear of the Jews made them desert their master when he was first seized; made Peter, the most zealous of the apostles, deny him thrice, even with oaths and imprecations; and made the apostles and disciples, when they met together on the day of the resurrection, to confer upon the accounts they had received of Christ's being risen, retire into a chamber, and shut the door, lest they should be discovered by the Jews. Such, then, was the state of the apostles' minds upon the death of their master, full of prejudice, doubt, perplexity, despair, and terror: distemperatures that required a gentle treatment, lenient medicines, and a gradual cure. Which leads me to consider, in the next place, the manner, that is, the method and order, of that evidence by which they were recovered into a state of sanity; and from deserters of their master converted into believers, teachers, and martyrs of the gospel.

Sect. XI.—The first alarm they received was from Mary Magdalene, who, early in the morning, on the third day from the burial of our Saviour, came running to inform Peter and John, that she had found the stone rolled from the mouth of the sepulchre, and that the body of the Lord was taken away. This information carried those two apostles thither, who entered into the sepulchre, and found the linen clothes in which his body had been wrapped, and the napkin that was bound about his head, folded up, and lying in different parts of the sepulchre. These circumstances, trifling as they may seem at first sight, were, if duly considered, very awakening, and very proper to prepare their minds for something extraordinary; since nothing but the resurrection of Jesus could, in right reason, be concluded from them. The body, they saw, was gone; but by whom could it be taken away, and for what purpose? Not by friends; for then, in all probability, they would have known something about it: Not by the Jews, for they had nothing to do with it; Pilate, to whom alone the disposal of it belonged, as the body of a malefactor executed by his orders, had given it to his disciples, who had laid it in that sepulchre but two days before; and wherefore should they remove it again so soon? Not to bury it; for in that case they would not have left the spices, the winding-sheet, and the napkin behind them. Whoever, therefore, had removed the body, they could not have done it with a design to bury it; and yet no other purpose for the removal of it could well be

imagined. Besides, it must have been removed in the night by stealth, and, consequently, in a hurry: how then came the winding-sheet and the napkin to be folded up, and disposed in so orderly a manner within the sepulchre? Add to all this, that the stone was very large, and therefore many people must have been concerned in this transaction, not one of whom was there to give an answer to any questions. These, or such like reflections, could not but rise in their minds, and these difficulties could not but dispose them to expect some extraordinary event. His life, they knew, was a life of miracles, and his death was attended with prodigies and wonders; all which could not but come crowding into their memories; and yet none of them at that time (excepting John) believed that he was risen from the dead; "for as yet," as that apostle assures us, "they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead:" that is, they did not understand from the prophets that the Messiah was to rise again from the dead, being, on the contrary, persuaded, that these very prophets had foretold the Messiah should not die, but "abide for ever."

The next information they received was from Joanna,* and the women who accompanied her to the sepulchre, who acquainted them with two new and very surprising particulars, namely, that they had there seen a vision of angels, and that those angels had told them that Jesus was risen, and had moreover reminded them of what himself had formerly spoken to his disciples concerning his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection on the third day, being foretold by the prophets. What various reflections must these two amazing circumstances immediately suggest to them! The great difficulty about the body of their master being missing, which had so much alarmed and puzzled them, was at once solved. Angels told the women he was risen from the dead; and to induce them the more easily to believe so astonishing an event, bade them remember that Christ himself had, not only from the spirit of prophecy, with which they knew he was endowed, but from the prophets also, predicted his own sufferings, and death, and rising again from the dead on the third day. The words of their master they well remembered, and were so far convinced that the women spoke truth. Those parts also of this prediction, which related to his sufferings and death, they had seen most exactly accomplished; and that was a powerful argument for their believing that the rest might be so too: besides, this was the third day, the very day on which Jesus had told them he should rise from the dead. The argument, therefore, drawn from the testimony of the prophets, upon which their disbelief of the resurrection was principally founded, was here attacked; and the interpretation of their master, verified in most of the particulars by the event, was here set up in opposition to that of the scribes and pharisees, whose leaven they had so frequently been cautioned against. But then they did not understand what was meant by his rising from the dead. Was he once more to live with them upon earth? If so, where was he? Nobody had as yet seen him, neither the women, nor those among them, who, upon their report, had gone to the sepulchre. By his rising from the dead, therefore, might be meant, that God had taken him into heaven as he did Enoch and Elijah; and could they hope he would return from thence to be the redeemer and king of Israel? To obviate these several difficulties, and proceed one step farther towards explaining to them the meaning of the resurrection, they were probably acquainted in the next place by Mary Magdalene, that she had seen, not

* I have placed this report of Joanna next to the relation above cited made by Mary Magdalene, and before the second report made by her, and that of the other two Marys; because, by what the two disciples, who were going to Emmaus, say to Jesus, it is evident that they had heard the report of Joanna, and had not, when they left the rest of the disciples, heard either of the last mentioned reports. Farther, by their using the first person plural in speaking of those to whom this report was made, as some women of *our* company made us astonished, compared with what Saint Luke says at the 9th verse, of the women returning and telling all those things to the eleven and all the rest, it looks as if they were of the number of those who were present when this report was made; and that Saint Peter was of that number is evident, and so, I think, were all the eleven, and many other of those called disciples, assembled together probably by John and Peter, as was before observed. These several points being admitted, it will follow, that the report of Joanna and those with her, was made to the eleven and all the rest, previously to the second report of Mary Magdalene, and that of the other two Marys, though the events, which gave occasion to the two latter, were in order of time prior to that related by Joanna; for if any of those, who were present when Joanna related what had happened to her at the sepulchre, had heard that Christ had appeared to Mary Magdalene and the two other Marys, they would doubtless have mentioned it upon that occasion, in which case it must have been heard, and would as certainly have been mentioned by the two disciples, in their conversation with Jesus on the way to Emmaus; and even supposing they were not present when Joanna made her report, but received it only from some who were, it is probable that they that told them the particulars relating to Joanna, and Peter's second visit to the sepulchre, would at the same time have informed them of the accounts given by Mary Magdalene and the other Marys, had they at that time heard any thing of them. There may, indeed, be some difficulty in accounting for this, especially as the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene was very early; and it is said, John, xx. 18, that she went and told it to the disciples; and still more expressly by Saint Mark, xvi. 20; and if her zeal and haste in carrying the news of the stone's being removed, and the warmth of her own temper, and the express command of Christ to her to acquaint his disciples, be considered, it will appear very probable that she went on this errand immediately; and it is very natural to think that she went directly to Peter this second time, as she did the first; and that apostle, when he left her at the sepulchre, went directly home, as did also John, (xx. 10.) But if he and Peter were gone to acquaint the other disciples with the Lord's body being missing, as is above supposed, her not finding them immediately is easily accounted for; besides which, many other things might happen unknown to us to bring Joanna, and those with her, to Peter and the other disciples, before they saw Mary Magdalene after her second visit to the sepulchre, and before the other two Marys came with their message, who, notwithstanding their nearness to the city when Christ appeared to them, and the early date of that appearance, might possibly not be enough recovered from their fright to deliver their message immediately; or, if they were, they might, for the reason above given, miss that apostle (Peter) to whom they were particularly commanded to deliver it, and to whom, therefore, in all probability, they went directly. All these things, however, are mere conjectures, and as such I submit them to the judgment of the reader.

angels only, but Christ himself, who had appeared to her as she stood weeping at the sepulchre; that at first, indeed, she did not know him, taking him for the gardener; that upon his calling her by her name she knew him; that having offered to embrace him, he forbade her, giving her for a reason that he was "not yet ascended to his Father;" but bidding her go, and tell his disciples, that in a short time he should "ascend to his Father and their Father, his God and their God." In this relation of Mary Magdalene's were three articles of great importance. 1*st*, A stronger proof, than any they had hitherto received, of Christ's being risen from the dead: Mary Magdalene had seen him. 2*dly*, He told her he was "not yet ascended to his Father," by which there seemed to be some hopes given them, that they also might have the satisfaction of seeing him. 3*dly*, The words, "I ascend to my Father," &c. plainly referred to a conversation he had with them before he was betrayed, in which he told them that he should "go to his Father," &c. By these words, therefore, they were not only reminded of another prediction of his, but called upon to expect the great things which were to be the consequence of his "going to the Father," namely, the "coming of the Comforter," a power of working miracles; and what would be an earnest of all these things, the joy of seeing him again; all which he had promised them in the conversation alluded to in this message, John, xiii. 14. Yet some doubts and difficulties still remained. Nobody but Mary Magdalene had seen him; and she did not know him at first, but took him for the gardener. Perhaps the whole was illusion; but allowing it was Christ whom she saw, why was she commanded not to touch him? It was probably an apparition, and not Christ himself. Besides, wherefore did he not appear to his disciples, who, according to his own promise, were to see him again? The whole story, therefore, might still appear to them an idle visionary tale.

To deliver them from these perplexities nothing could be better calculated, than the account given by the other Mary and Salome, which imported that they also had been at the sepulchre, where they had seen an angel, who not only assured them that Christ was risen, but ordered them to tell his disciples that they should meet him in Galilee, agreeably to what he himself had said to them in his lifetime: That they were so amazed and terrified at this vision, that they fled from the sepulchre with the utmost precipitation, intending to communicate these things to the apostles, as the angel had commanded them, but were so overcome with fear, that they had not the power to tell what they had seen and heard to some whom they saw in the way: That as they were going, Jesus Christ himself met them, and saluting them with an "All hail! bade them not be afraid, but go and tell his brethren that they should go into Galilee, and that they should see him there;" to which they added, that "they went, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him:" And farther, they informed Peter, that the angel had expressly enjoined them to deliver this message to him in particular. Had the apostles and disciples given credit to this account of Mary and Salome, they could have had but one scruple left. Jesus had now appeared to two women besides Mary Magdalene; had permitted those women to embrace his feet, and given thereby a sensible proof that it was himself, and not an apparition, and had also appointed a place, where they themselves were to see him. The only scruple therefore, that now remained, arose from their not having seen him themselves; and till they did, they seemed resolved to suspend their belief of his being risen from the dead, and treated all these several visions of the women as so many idle tales.

It is observable that all these miraculous incidents followed close upon the back of one another, and consequently were crowded into a small compass of time; so that we ought to be the less surprised at the apostles not yielding at once to so much evidence. Such a heap of wonders were enough to amaze and overwhelm their understandings. They were therefore left for a time to ruminate upon what they had heard; to compare the several reports together; to examine the Scriptures; and recollect the predictions and discourses of their master, to which they were referred both by the angels and himself. But the examination of the Scriptures was a work of some time; and in the situation in which they then were, their minds undoubtedly were in too great an agitation to settle to such an employment, with the composure and attention that was necessary. Besides, it must be remembered, they were a company of illiterate men, not versed in the interpretations of prophecies, nor accustomed to long arguments and deductions; and were moreover under the dominion of an inveterate prejudice, authorized by the scribes and pharisees, the priests and elders, whose learning and whose doctrines they had been instructed early to revere. To assist them in their inquiries, and lead them to the true sense of the Scriptures, the only rational means of conquering their prejudices, Christ himself appeared that same day to two of his disciples, who were going to Emmaus, a village about threescore furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and whom he found discoursing and reasoning, as they went, upon those very topics. These disciples, as I have already shewed, had left Jerusalem, before any of the women, who had seen Christ, had made their report; at least that report had

not come to their knowledge. All they had heard was, that some women, who had been early at the sepulchre, had there been informed by angels, that he was risen from the dead, and put in mind that he himself had formerly predicted his resurrection, by shewing out of the prophets that so it was to be. This argument were they debating, when our Saviour joined them; who, questioning them upon the subject of their debate, and the affliction visible in their countenances; and understanding from the account they gave, that they were still unsatisfied as to the main point, and seemed to put the proof of his being risen from the dead, upon his shewing himself alive, rebuked them first for their "ignorance and backwardness in believing all that the prophets had spoken; and then beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." During this whole conversation they knew him not; their eyes were holden, as Saint Luke informs us, and for what reason is very plain. The design of Christ in entering into so particular an exposition of the prophets was to shew, that by making a proper use of their understanding, they might, from those very Scriptures, whose authority they allowed, have been convinced that the Messiah ought to have suffered, as they had seen him suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day. That is, Christ chose rather to convince them by reason, than by sense; or at least so to prepare their minds, that their assenting afterwards to the testimony of their senses should be with the concurrence of their reason. He had proceeded in the same manner with the other disciples at Jerusalem, from all of whom he had hitherto withholden the evidence of sense, having not appeared to any of them, excepting Peter, till after the return of these two disciples to Jerusalem. This proceeding, at once so becoming the Lord of righteousness and truth, and the freedom of man as a reasonable being, must have been prevented, had Christ discovered himself to them at his first appearing. Wonder and astonishment in that case had taken place of reason, and left them, perhaps, when the first strong impression was a little worn away, in doubt and scepticism. But now, having duly prepared them to receive the testimony of their senses, he discovered himself to them, and that by an act of devotion, "in breaking of bread," which among the Jews was always attended with thanksgiving to God, the giver of our daily bread. But there seems to have been something peculiar in this action, upon which account it was mentioned by Saint Luke in his narration of this history, and by the two disciples themselves, when they related to the apostles at Jerusalem, what had happened to them at Emmaus. The manner undoubtedly of breaking the bread, and probably the form of words in the thanksgiving, were particular to our Saviour; and these latter perhaps were the very same with those made use of by him at the last supper. At least, these two actions are described by Saint Luke in the same words, namely, "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave to them." If so, how strongly were they called upon by this action to remember their Lord, who had instituted that very form in remembrance of his death! and how properly did it accompany that discovery of himself which he now thought fit to make to them! Accordingly they were convinced, and returned that same hour to Jerusalem, where they found the apostles assembled together, and debating, apparently upon the several reports they had heard that day, and particularly upon what Peter had told them, to whom some time that day Christ had appeared. But as neither the time, nor the particulars of that appearance are recorded by the evangelists, I shall not pretend to say any thing more about it, than that the apostles seem to have laid a greater stress upon that alone, than upon all those related by the women. For upon these two disciples coming into the chamber, they accost them immediately, without waiting to hear their story, with "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," but make no mention of any of his appearances to the women. After which, the two disciples related what had happened to them in the way to Emmaus, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. But Saint Mark says, (xvi. 13,) they did not believe these two disciples any more than they had done the others, to whom Christ had appeared; which words seem to contain a sort of a contradiction to what they themselves seem to acknowledge in saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Let us therefore examine these two passages with a little more attention. The whole passage in Saint Mark is this: "After that, he appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked, and went into the country, and they went and told it unto the residue, neither believed they them." To which I must add the following: (xvi. 14,) "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them, which had seen him after he was risen." By comparing these passages in Saint Mark with the parallel passages in Saint Luke, it will appear what the belief of the apostles was, and what their unbelief. The parallel to the first has been already considered. The course of my narration leads me now to consider that to the second; and in the doing of this, I shall take occasion to observe how they illustrate and explain each other, and thereby vindicate

these two evangelists from the suspicion of contradicting one another's account.

The apostles, by the several relations of the women, which they received early in the morning, and upon which they had had sufficient time to comment and reflect, (for it was now night,) and afterwards by those of Peter and the two disciples from Emmaus, being ripe for conviction, Christ vouchsafed to give them that evidence they seemed so much to desire, and which having been granted to others, they had some reason to hope for and expect. Accordingly, as the disciples from Emmaus had just finished their story, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you; and they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit." Here then was their error, and in this consisted their unbelief. They acknowledged indeed that Christ was risen from the dead, but did not believe that he had bodily appeared to those, who pretended to have seen him, and to have had sufficient evidence upon that point. These, Saint Mark says, they did not believe; and we learn from Saint Luke, that when he appeared to them, they did not believe even their own eyes, but supposed they had seen a spirit. That this was the unbelief for which, as we read in Saint Mark, our Saviour rebuked them, is evident from what follows after in Saint Luke. "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts [reasonings, *διαλογισμοι*] arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet." We may judge of the distemper by the remedy. He bade them feel and see that it was no spirit, but he himself. Why? because they doubted of it: and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they doubted of it, notwithstanding the testimony of people, whose veracity they had no reason to suspect, and who brought credentials with them, that could not be forged. It being evident from these passages, thus compared together, that the unbelief of the apostles, mentioned by Saint Mark, and the belief which they professed, according to Saint Luke, were both partial, those two evangelists are thus perfectly reconciled.

But if any one should still insist that these words of the apostles and disciples, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," imply that they then had a full and explicit belief of the resurrection of Christ, as from the force of the word *indeed*, I am myself inclined to think, and should demand how they came afterwards to disbelieve the two disciples, and to suspect even that appearance which themselves saw? I answer, that in the appearance of Christ to the two disciples, and in that afterwards to themselves, were some circumstances, which at first, and till more satisfactory proofs were given, might naturally tend to confound and unsettle the faith which they had taken up upon the evidence of Peter: because Christ appearing first to the two disciples in another form, and vanishing out of their sight as soon as he was made known to them, seemed better to suit with the idea of his being a spirit, than a living body; and his entering into the room where they were assembled, the doors being shut, rather confirmed that idea, in the first sudden impression it made upon their minds; which mistake, in both cases, arose from their not attending sufficiently to the miraculous powers belonging to Christ; to the operations of which his being in the body was no impediment. This inadvertency, and want of due consideration in the apostles and disciples, justifies our Saviour's rebuking them for not believing them which had seen him.

But the doubts occasioned by it were soon overcome by those farther proofs of the reality of his body, which he afterwards vouchsafed to give them: and by this explanation, as well as by the former, the evangelists are cleared from contradicting each other.

However, neither did these proofs entirely satisfy them; for as the history goes on, "While they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, Christ said unto them, Have ye any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and an honeycomb, and he took it and did eat before them." So much compassion did he shew for their infirmity! and so much care did he take, that not even a shadow of a scruple should remain in their minds, upon a point of the utmost importance to the great business he came about! And perceiving now that every doubt was vanished, and they were perfectly convinced, he said to them, (pursuing the argument begun by the angels, and carried on by himself with the two disciples in the way of Emmaus,) "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ (that is, the Messiah) to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance, and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem; and ye are witnesses of these things."

The apostles having now had every kind of evidence laid before them, that was requisite to convince them of the reality of the resurrection of Christ; and being moreover enabled by the gift of that Holy Spirit, which inspired the prophets, to understand the true meaning of those sacred oracles, to which their master

constantly referred them for the marks and characters of the Messiah, which he affirmed to be found in him, as well in his sufferings, and death, and rising again from the dead on the third day, as in the miraculous actions and unspotted holiness of his life, were again left to consider and examine at leisure the several proofs of the resurrection, which they had heard and seen that day; and particularly those arising from the accomplishment of the predictions contained in the Holy Scriptures. That they might apply themselves to this examination with that cool, deliberate, and sober attention, that is more especially necessary to the rooting out inveterate and religious prejudices, and planting in their stead a rational and well-grounded faith, such as is required of all those who believe in Christ, and was particularly necessary for them who were to be witnesses of all these things to all the world, he forebore visiting them any more for eight days; after which he condescended to submit himself to a farther examination, in order to remove the unreasonable scruples of Saint Thomas, one of the apostles; who, having not been present when our Saviour appeared to the other disciples, and consequently not having seen him himself, refused to believe upon the report of others, so wonderful a thing as Christ's rising from the dead: nay, he was resolved not to be convinced with seeing only, "Except I shall see in his hands," says he, "the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Jesus, when he appeared to his disciples, shewed them his hands and his feet, as a proof of his being the same Jesus that was crucified. This circumstance, among the rest, the apostles undoubtedly related to Saint Thomas, as an evidence by which they were assured that it was their master whom they had seen; and upon this evidence Saint Thomas also was contented to believe: But first he would be convinced that it was real, he would not only see the print of the nails, which might be counterfeited, he would "put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. Eight days after, therefore, when his disciples were again met together in a chamber, and Thomas was with them, Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." What could Saint Thomas do, but yield immediately to the evidence he had required? And what could he say to one, who appeared to know all his thoughts, but, "My Lord, and my God!" Jesus saith unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

After this, there seems to have been no scruple left in the minds of any one of the apostles, to whom, however, Christ was still pleased to continue his visits, being seen of them, as Saint Luke testifies, (Acts, i. 3,) "forty days after his passion, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." But as hitherto all the appearances of Christ seem to have been intended only for the conviction of his apostles, and those that follow rather for their confirmation and instruction in the faith and doctrines of the gospel, the sacred writers, who have been very particular in the accounts they give us of the former, have mentioned but very few of the latter: I say few; for I think it highly probable that the appearances of Christ to his apostles for the remaining thirty days, were more than they have thought proper to record. And the reason of this different proceeding is very obvious. The apostles are to be considered both as witnesses of the miracles, and the sufferings, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and teachers and preachers of his doctrine. In the character of witnesses, a circumstantial account of the means and opportunities they had of knowing certainly the several facts attested by them, must needs give great force and credit to their evidence; whereas, in that of preachers, it is sufficient that their auditors were satisfied in general that the doctrines taught by them were derived from the instructions, and authorized by the commission given them by their master "to teach all nations;" and of this, the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, poured out not upon the apostles only, but by them upon all believers, were full and unquestionable proofs. But among the last mentioned appearances of Christ, there are two, which, by reason of their connection with the former, ought by no means to have been omitted: the first relates to Christ's meeting his disciples in Galilee, which was foretold by Christ himself before his death, repeated by the angels to the women at the sepulchre, and afterwards confirmed to them again by Christ. The accomplishment of this prophecy it was certainly necessary to shew: accordingly, we have it in Saint Matthew, who says, "Then the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw him they worshipped him: but others doubted." The second, in like manner corresponds with what was spoken by our Saviour to Mary Magdalene in these words:—"But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;" which words, as I have already observed, referred to a conversation he had with his disciples the night before he was betrayed, wherein he told them, 1*st*, That he should go to his Father; 2*dly*, That

he would come to them before he went to his Father; 3*dly*, That after he was gone to the Father, he would send them a Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, who would "teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them;" and 4*thly*, That whosoever believed on him should have the power of working as great, nay, greater miracles than he did. The fulfilling of which several promises or prophecies I shall now set down, only premising, that the second article was abundantly accomplished by the several appearances above mentioned, as we have already seen. The first, namely, his ascension into heaven, came to pass in this manner:—(Acts, i. 4—14.) "And being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which said unto them, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The history of the accomplishment of the third article is in the next chapter, and in these words:—"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting: and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in their own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak, Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born! Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya, about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." For a proof of the completion of the fourth article, I shall refer the reader to the history of the Acts of the Apostles, in which he will find numberless instances of the power of working miracles in the apostles; "by whose hands," says the historian, (v. 12,) "were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one."

From this view of the method and order in which the several proofs of the resurrection were laid before the apostles, it is manifest that, as Christ required of them a reasonable and well-grounded faith, so did he pursue the most proper and effectual means for the attaining that end. With this purpose, instead of bearing down their reason, and dazzling their understanding by a full manifestation of himself all at once, we see him letting in the light upon them by little and little, and preparing their minds by the gradual dawning of truth, that they might be able to bear the full lustre of the Sun of Righteousness rising from the grave; to consider, and examine, and know, that it was he himself, and to assure the world it was impossible they could be deceived. And as, by this proceeding in general, he intended to open their understandings by degrees, and conduct them step by step to a full conviction and knowledge of the truth, so, by referring them to the Scriptures, and submitting himself to the scrutiny and judgment of their senses, he did not only wave all authority, but require them in a strong and particular manner to exercise their reason in examining the evidence brought before them; for which purpose, also, he both improved their faculties by the infusion of his Holy Spirit, and gave them sufficient time, and frequent opportunities, "shewing himself to them alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs," says the author of the Acts, "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." And most certainly never was evidence more fairly offered to consideration; never was there inquiry put into a more rational method, as indeed there

never were any facts that could better abide the test. This I shall now endeavour to evince, by considering the facts themselves, upon which the proof of the resurrection, and consequently the faith of the apostles, was established.

Sect. XII.—The facts of which the evidence of the resurrection consisted, may be comprised under three heads:—1*st*, The appearances of the angels; 2*dly*, The appearances of Christ to the women; and, 3*dly*, The appearances of Christ to the disciples and apostles.

1*st*, The appearances of the angels at the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection were many, each differing from the other, and seen by different persons; as, 1*st*, By the Roman soldiers who kept the sepulchre; 2*dly*, By the other Mary and Salome; 3*dly*, By Mary Magdalene; 4*thly*, By Joanna, and those with her.

The angel who appeared to the Roman soldiers was clothed with terror, "his face was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." His coming was attended with an earthquake, and his strength so much beyond that of mortals, that he singly rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; which, according to Beza's copies, both Greek and Latin, was so large that twenty men could hardly roll it. I have already taken notice of the two purposes, upon which this angel of the Lord descended from heaven, namely, to fright away the soldiers, and to open the sepulchre, that the women, who were then on their way thither, and the others, both women and disciples and Jews, who were to come thither that day, might have free entrance into it, and see that the body of Jesus was not there. The reasonableness of these two purposes, I think, every body must acknowledge; and that is a very material point towards establishing the credibility of the fact; especially if we consider that, without the interposition of Heaven, the sepulchre would probably not have been opened, nor the guard removed, till after the expiration of the third day, the day prefixed by Christ for his rising from the dead; in which case, though no earthly power could have hindered Christ, who is the power of God, from coming out of the grave, yet the door of the sepulchre remaining closed, and the guard continuing there, must effectually have prevented that examination into the state of the sepulchre, which convinced Saint John that Christ was risen; and which, if it did not of itself amount to a clear proof of the resurrection, was at least admirably calculated to prepare the minds, not of the apostles only, but of all the Jews who were at that time in Jerusalem, to admit such other proofs, as were afterwards offered to their consideration. For it is not to be imagined, that none but the disciples of Jesus visited the sepulchre that day. The story told by the soldiers undoubtedly soon spread all over Jerusalem; and bare curiosity, without any other motive, was surely sufficient to carry numbers to survey the scene of so astonishing an event: A sepulchre, hewed out of a rock, closed with a vast stone, and that stone but the evening before sealed up by the high priests and elders, and committed to a guard of Roman soldiers; this sepulchre, notwithstanding all these precautions, opened, as one part of the soldiers reported, by an angel from heaven, or as others said, by the disciples of Jesus; who, as was pretended, came by night, and while the guard slept, stole away the body of Jesus, which in effect was missing. These two different and irreconcileable reports must have likewise induced others to go, and consider upon the spot, by examining into the nature and situation of the sepulchre, the probability of that report, which charged the disciples with having stolen away the body of Jesus; for as, upon that supposition, none but human means are said to have been employed, in order to know whether those means were proportioned to the effects ascribed to them, it was necessary to compare what was done, with the manner in which it was pretended to be performed. And upon such an examination, I think, it must have appeared to every considerate man, if not impossible, at least improbable in the highest degree, for the disciples of Jesus to have stolen away his body, while the guards were at their posts. For supposing the disciples to be the reverse of what they were, bold, enterprising, cunning impostors, and capable of making so hazardous an attempt; can it also be supposed, that a company of Roman soldiers, trained up under the strictest discipline, and placed there but the evening before, should be all asleep at the same time, and sleep so soundly and so long, as not to be awakened, either by rolling away the stone, (which, as it singly closed up the mouth of the sepulchre, must certainly have been very large) or by the carrying off the body; the former of which required a great number of hands, and the latter must have appeared to have been done with some deliberation, since the linen clothes in which the body was wrapped, and the napkin, that was wound about the head, were folded up and laid in different parts of the sepulchre. The sepulchre was hewed or hollowed into the solid rock; so that they could have no thought of making a secret passage into it, by digging through the rock; and consequently must have gone in by that only entrance, which was closed up by a great stone, and guarded by a band of Roman soldiers. These several circumstances, duly attended to, were of themselves sufficient to invalidate the testimony of those soldiers, who pretended that the disciples

stole away their master's body while they were asleep. But they were, on the other hand, very strong arguments for the credibility of that account, in which all the soldiers at first agreed, and which part of them undoubtedly had published, before the other story was put into their mouths by the chief priests and elders. For in this relation a cause is assigned proportionable to all the effects,—effects which, as they were visible and notorious, as well as extraordinary, could not fail of exciting the natural curiosity of mankind to inquire by what means they were brought about. The solution is easy and full, "An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, and sat upon it: His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." This accounts for the terror of the soldiers, their deserting their post, their precipitate flight into the city; for the stone's being rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, even while it was surrounded by a Roman guard; for the sepulchral linen being left in the grave, folded up, and lying in different places; and for the body's being missing; and therefore the cause here assigned, however wonderful, is most likely to be true.

Nor could the miracle be any objection to the credibility of this account among the Jews, who, upon the authority of their lawgiver, their prophets, and their historians, were accustomed to think the working miracles very consistent with the idea of God, the Almighty and All-wise Creator of heaven and earth; though some modern philosophers have pretended to discover from reason, that miracles are to the common sense and understanding of man utterly impossible, and contrary to the unchangeableness of God. This point, indeed, if it could be made out, (as most certainly it cannot,) would of itself be a sufficient answer to all the arguments that can be brought in support of the credibility, not of this story only, but of all the evangelical history, and the Jewish religion also; and would supersede all other objections to them, as needless and superfluous. Let those, then, who upon the force of this speculation deny Christianity, here try their strength: let them prove that miracles are utterly impossible, &c. or, till they do, let them give leave to those, who are of a contrary opinion, to insist that in the present case the miracle can be no objection to the credibility of the fact; and that, as I have said, it could have been none among the Jews in particular, who from their infancy had heard, and read, and believed the mighty signs and wonders wrought by God for his people Israel; had expected to find in the Messiah a power of working miracles; and had evidence of many performed among them by Jesus and his disciples. And indeed the appearance of an angel upon this occasion, so far from being an objection, was highly proper, I had almost said necessary. Jesus had, but two days before, been put to death by the rulers of the Jews, as an impostor; one who, by the authority of Beelzebub, cast out devils, and by assuming the character of the Messiah, blasphemed God. His sepulchre also was guarded by a band of soldiers, under the pretence of preventing his disciples from carrying on the imposture begun by their master, by stealing away his body, and giving out that he was risen from the dead, in consequence of what he had said before his crucifixion. Under these circumstances, the attestation of Heaven was necessary to shew that God, though he had suffered him to expire on the cross, had not forsaken him; but on the contrary had co-operated with him even in his sufferings, his death, and burial, and resurrection from the dead on the third day; having, by the secret workings of his providence and his almighty power, accomplished in every point the several predictions of Jesus relating to each of those events,—events which, at the time of those predictions, none but God, or an eye enlightened by his omniscient Spirit, could foresee; and which nothing less than his all-controlling power could bring about. The descent, therefore, of the angel of the Lord from heaven, and his rolling away the stone from the sepulchre, was a visible proof that the finger of God was in the great work of the resurrection; was a proper honour done to him who claimed to be the Son of God, and unanswerably refuted the impious calumnies of those who, upon account of that claim, styled him an impostor and blasphemer.

Sect. XIII.—What has been just said of the propriety and necessity of an angel's descending from heaven upon the present occasion, is applicable in general to the several appearances of angels seen by the women, which I shall examine in the next place, taking it for granted, that the miraculousness of such appearances will be no longer urged as an argument against their possibility. The only thing, then, remaining to be considered in this examination is the internal evidence which these several visions carry along with them of reality and truth; for by some they have been treated as pure illusions, and by others as downright falsehoods. The principal argument made use of to prove their falsehood is founded upon a supposed contradiction and inconsistency in the several accounts given of them by the evangelists; which argument having been thoroughly discussed in the foregoing part of this discourse, I must refer the reader thither for an answer to it. That these appearances were illusions, the effects of superstition, ignorance, and fear, hath been insinuated rather than asserted; but hath never, that I know of, been attempted to be proved.

I shall not therefore amuse myself with a vain search after arguments, which, I presume, are not easy to be found, or they would have been produced by those who have laboured with so much diligence to expose and ridicule the faith of Christians; but leaving such to make good their assertion who shall think fit to maintain it, I shall proceed to lay down a few observations tending to prove the reality and truth of these appearances of the angels to the women.

The angel first seen by the women was that described by Saint Mark, in the form of a "young man sitting [within the sepulchre] on the right side, clothed in a long white garment," at the sight of whom the women [Mary and Salome] discovering great signs of fear, he saith unto them, "Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." That this was a real vision, and no phantom of the imagination, is evident from these particulars. 1*st*, As it does not appear from this or any other account, that the women, upon their coming to the sepulchre, were under any such terrors or perturbation of mind, as are apt to fill the fancy with spectres and apparitions. On the contrary, they went thither a little after day-break, prepared and expecting to find the dead body of Jesus there, and purposing to embalm it; about the doing of which they had been calmly conferring by the way. So, 2*dly*, By their coming with a design to embalm the body, it is plain they had no notion either of his being already risen, or that he would rise from the dead; and therefore, 3*dly*, Had the angel been only the creature of a disturbed imagination, they would scarcely have put into his mouth a speech that directly contradicted all the ideas upon which they proceeded but one moment before. 4*thly*, It is to be observed farther, that the illusion must have been double; two senses must have been deceived, the hearing and the sight; for the angel was heard as well as seen; and though this frequently happens in dreams, and sometimes perhaps in a delirium, or a fit of madness, yet I question whether an instance exactly parallel, in all its parts, to the case here supposed, was ever known; for no two people dream together exactly alike, nor are affected in a delirium with exactly the same imaginations. 5*thly*, The words spoken by the angel refer to others spoken by Christ to his disciples before his passion, in which he told them, that after "he was risen, he would go before them to Galilee." This promise or prediction the angel here reminds them of, bids them tell the disciples from him to go into Galilee, and promises them that Christ will meet them there. Now, as not only the resurrection, but the personal appearance of Christ also, is implied in these words, the reason given above, under the third particular, concludes, in the present case, more strongly against supposing them to have proceeded only from the imagination of the women; for the sudden change of whose opinion from a disbelief of the resurrection, into a full and explicit belief of it, no adequate cause can be assigned. For if it should be allowed that they knew of this prediction of Christ's, (which, however, does not appear,) yet the business that brought them to the sepulchre makes it evident, that till that instant they did either not recollect, not understand, or not believe it. And if it be farther said, that upon their entering into the sepulchre, and not finding the body of Jesus, this prediction might naturally come at once into their heads, and they might as suddenly, and as reasonably believe Christ to be risen, as Saint John did, whose faith was built upon no other evidence than what these women had now before them; I answer, that allowing Saint John, when he is said to have first believed the resurrection, had no other evidence than these women now had, or might have had, yet it is to be observed, that Saint John was in a fitter disposition of mind to reflect and judge upon that evidence, than the women. Saint John ran to the sepulchre upon the information given him by Mary Magdalene, that the body of Jesus was removed from thence, and laid she knew not where, nor by whom; and, as the sepulchre was at some distance from his habitation, many thoughts must naturally have arisen in his mind, tending to account for the removal of the body; and among the rest, perhaps, some confused and obscure hope that he might be risen from the dead, pursuant to many predictions to that purpose delivered by him to his disciples. But whatever his thoughts were at the time of his coming to the sepulchre, about which it must be owned nothing can be offered but mere conjecture, it is certain he had leisure to reflect upon the predictions of his master, and to examine into the state of the sepulchre, which both he and Peter did, (and that implies some deliberation and presence of mind,) and that after this deliberate examination he departed quietly to his own home. Whereas, the women are represented as falling into the utmost terror and amazement immediately upon their entering into the sepulchre, and continuing under the same consternation till they were met flying from thence by Christ himself. Under such a disorder of mind, can we suppose them capable of recollecting the predictions of Christ about his resurrection? considering the proofs of their accomplishment arising from the state of the sepulchre? and persuading themselves at once that he was not only

risen from the dead, but would personally appear to his disciples? and then immediately upon this conviction, fancying they saw an angel, and heard him assure them in a distinct manner that Christ was risen, call them to view the place where he had been laid, and bid them tell his disciples that he would meet them in Galilee. In a word, if this supposed illusion proceeded from a strong persuasion that Christ was risen from the dead, whence arose that belief? If that belief arose from a cool reflection upon the predictions of our Saviour, and the state of the sepulchre, (the cause of Saint John's faith,) whence came their terror? which, if not previous to the apparition of the angel, was at least prior to the words, "Be not affrighted," with which he first accosted them. If it be urged, that this terror was of the nature of those causeless and unaccountable terrors called panics, it may be answered, that this is giving us a name instead of a reason, and is, in effect, saying just nothing at all, or saying no more than that they were affrighted, but nobody can tell why or wherefore. *6thly*, It is observable, that the speech of the angel to the women consists of ten distinct particulars, as, 1. "Be not affrighted; 2. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; 3. He is risen; 4. He is not here; 5. Behold the place where they laid him; 6. But go your way, tell his disciples; 7. And Peter; 8. That he goeth before you into Galilee; 9. There shall ye see him; 10. As he said unto you." The order and connection of which several particulars, are no less remarkable than their number; and, therefore, taking both these considerations into the account, I leave any one to judge whether it be conceivable that women under so great a terror and distraction of mind, as to fancy they saw and heard an angel when there was no such thing, should be able to compose a speech for this phantom of their fear and imagination, containing so much matter, order, and reason, and proceeding upon the supposition that they were not then convinced that Christ was risen from the dead, though the belief of his resurrection is presumed not only to have preceded, but even to have occasioned this illusion.

I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this first appearance of the angel to the women, because the settling the nature of that will save us the trouble of entering into a particular discussion of the rest; the several articles of which will fall under one or other of the foregoing observations. All I shall do, therefore, is, to note the different circumstances observable in each of them, and from thence endeavour to raise another argument for the truth and reality of all.

The vision we have just now considered, was of one angel; that seen by Mary Magdalene was of two; as was likewise that reported by Joanna and those with her. And whereas the first angel was found by the women, upon their entering into the sepulchre, sitting on the right side, the two last mentioned appearances were abrupt and sudden. For the angels which Mary Magdalene discovered sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had been laid, were not seen by Peter and John, who just before had entered into the sepulchre, and viewed every part of it with great attention; and Joanna, and those with her, had been some time in the sepulchre before they saw any angels; which angels seem also to have appeared to them in a different attitude from those seen by Mary Magdalene, and by the other Mary and Salome. As the number of the angels, and the manner of their appearance, was different, so likewise were the words spoken by them to the women, and the behaviour of the women upon those several occasions: Mary and Salome were seized with fear, and fled from the sepulchre in the utmost terror and amazement; Joanna, and those with her, were struck with awe and reverence, and bowed down their faces to the earth; but Mary Magdalene seems to have been so immersed in grief at not being able to find the body of the Lord, as to have taken little or no notice of so extraordinary an appearance; she sees, hears, and answers the angels without any emotion, and without quitting the object upon which her mind was wholly fixed, till she was awakened out of her trance by the well-known voice of her master calling her by her name. But here let us stop a little, and ask a question or two. Could this appearance, then, be an illusion? Could a mind so occupied, so lost in one idea, attend at the same time to the production of so many others of a different kind? Or could her imagination be strong enough to see and converse with angels, and yet too weak to make any impression on her, or call off her attention from a less affecting, less surprising subject? Real angels, indeed, she may be supposed to have seen and heard, and not to have regarded them; but apparitions raised by her own fancy could not have failed engaging her notice. For although, when we are awake, we cannot avoid perceiving the ideas excited in us by the organs of sensation, yet is it, in most instances, in our power to give to them what degree of attention we think fit; and hence it comes to pass, that when we are earnestly employed in any action, intent upon any thought, or transported by any passion, we see, and hear, and feel a thousand things, of which we take no more notice, than if we were utterly insensible of them, as every one's daily experience can testify: but to the ideas not proceeding immediately from sensation, but formed within us by the internal operation of our minds,

we cannot but attend; because we are active in their production, and because in their own nature they can exist no longer than while we attend to them. Of this kind are all the phantoms that haunt our sleeping or waking dreams; for so all ecstasies, deliriums, and the ravings of madness may not improperly be called; and whatever may be the physical cause that, upon these occasions, sets the mind to work, and influences her imagination, she is certainly more than passive in these productions, and is generally so attentive to them, as to disregard, during her transports, all the importunities of external objects; or to blend and colour with the prevailing idea all those arising from the information of the senses. From all which it is evident, that the mind cannot apply herself to the contemplation of more than one object at a time; which, as long as it keeps possession, excludes or obscures all others. Mary Magdalene, therefore, having taken it strongly into her head, upon seeing the stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, that some persons had removed the body of the Lord; in which notion she was still more confirmed, after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, and grieving at being thus disappointed of paying her last duty to her deceased master, whose body, as Peter his most zealous, and John his most beloved disciple, knew nothing of the removal of it, she might imagine was got into the hands of his enemies, to be exposed perhaps once more to fresh insults and indignities, or at least to be deprived of the pious offices which the duty and affection of his followers and disciples were preparing to perform,—Mary Magdalene, I say, falling into a passion of grief at this unexpected distress, and abandoning herself to all the melancholy reflections that must naturally arise from it, with her eyes suffused with tears, and thence discerning more imperfectly, looking as it were by accident, and while she was thinking on other matters, into the sepulchre, and seeing angels, might, according to the reasoning above laid down, give but little heed to them; as not perceiving on a sudden, and under so great a cloud of sorrow, the tokens of any thing extraordinary in that appearance. She might take them perhaps for two young men, which was the form assumed by those who appeared to the other women, without reflecting at first that it was impossible they should have been in the sepulchre without being seen by John and Peter, and improbable that they should have entered into it after their departure, without having been observed by her. Intent upon what passed within her own bosom, she did not give herself time to consider and examine external objects; and therefore knew not even Christ himself, who appeared to her in the same sudden and miraculous manner; but, "supposing him to be the gardener," begged him to tell her, if he had removed the body, where he had laid it, that she might take it away. By which question, and the answer she had made to the angels immediately before, we may perceive what her thoughts were so earnestly employed about; and thence conclude still farther, that the angels were not the creatures of her imagination, since they were plainly not the objects of her attention. The appearance therefore of the angels was real. But to return from this digression.

If the several appearances of the angels, examined separately, may be shewn to carry with them evident marks of reality and truth, the considering and comparing them together will set that point in a yet stronger light; such, we presume, as will entirely clear up every doubt in the minds of those who seem inclined to believe any thing possible, but that the gospel should be true. For both the number, the manner, the variety, and nature of the circumstances of these visions, and their being seen by different persons at different times, make it, according to the natural course of things, utterly incredible that there should have been in them either illusion or imposture. Many instances perhaps of illusions in single persons, and even in numbers (for nothing is more contagious than superstition and enthusiasm) may be produced; how well authenticated, it will be time enough to inquire when we know what they are. But I believe it will be generally found, upon a strict examination, that whenever any number of people have fallen into such an illusion, as, by the force of imagination only, to hear and see spectres and apparitions, the imagination, or artifice of some one among them, hath given birth to the phantom; and working upon minds already disposed to superstition, enthusiasm, or credulity, or cunningly prepared perhaps for that particular occasion, hath led them easily to see and hear things, that existed only in their own prepossessed and over-heated fancies. But nothing of all this can be pretended in the present case. The women, by whom these different visions of angels were severally seen, had no communication with each other during the time of these appearances, as is evident from the whole tenor of this history: Mary and Salome were fled from the sepulchre before Mary Magdalene returned; and Mary Magdalene was departed from thence again, before Joanna, and those with her, came thither; so that they could not catch the illusion from one another; and that their minds, at the time of their coming to the sepulchre, were very far from being disposed to form imaginations of Christ's being risen from the dead, is evident from the business that carried them thither. They came to perform the last offices usually paid to the

dead; and by embalming the body, to complete the interment of their deceased master; which by the coming on of the Sabbath, they had been obliged to leave unfinished; and when, upon entering into the sepulchre, they found not the body, it was more natural for them to think, with Mary Magdalene, that some persons had taken it away, and laid it they knew not where, than to conclude it was risen from the dead. And it is plain, that Joanna, and those with her, were in this way of thinking; for when they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus, they, says Saint Luke, "were much perplexed thereabout;" that is, they knew not what was become of the body, could not account for its being missing, and were therefore in great distress and anxiety about it; which would not have happened, had they believed that he had risen from the dead.

If, from what has been said, it may seem reasonable to conclude, that the appearances of the angels were not the effects of illusion, the phantoms of a distempered visionary mind, it will, I think, be more easily granted, that they were not the operations of artifice and imposture. For, without examining who could be the actors, or what the motives of an imposture of this kind, there are evidences enough, arising from the circumstances of these several appearances, to shew that the powers that produced them were more than human: such, for example, is the earthquake occasioned by the descent of the first angel; the amazing brightness of his countenance, which, Saint Matthew tells us, was like lightning; and the prodigious strength, which appeared in his singly rolling away a stone, that was large enough to close up the entrance into the sepulchre; and what was common to all the angels, the faculty of becoming visible or invisible as they thought proper. These certainly were characteristical marks of an agent endowed with privileges and powers superior to the limited abilities of man, whose operations cannot go farther than his knowledge of the laws and powers of nature; and how far short of such wonderful effects as these that knowledge would carry him, I leave the most ingenious professor of natural magic to determine.

Sect. XIV.—*2d*, I come now, in the second place, to consider the appearances of Christ himself to the women, which were two, the first to Mary Magdalene, the second to the other Mary and Salome. But I shall not have occasion to dwell long upon this head, since the appearances of the angels having been proved to be real, put these appearances of Christ more out of doubt and suspicion. The angels affirmed that he was risen from the dead; and if he was risen, it was natural to expect he would appear. The main difficulty consisted in his getting loose from the bands of death, and breaking the prison of the grave; and therefore, whoever, upon the testimony of the angels, believed the resurrection (as all those must have done who acknowledged them to be real angels) would not, if they saw Christ himself, be very apt to call in question the reality of his appearance. But though the testimony of angels, affirming that Christ was risen from the dead, renders his appearing afterwards less liable to doubt and question; yet, before we admit the reality of every such appearance as may be pretended, I grant it is reasonable to expect some farther proofs, though perhaps not so many or so strong, as if no such previous evidence had been given. And in the case of Mary and Salome, it may be suggested, that their very belief of the resurrection of Christ, joined to the disorder and amazement they were then under, might help to convince them too easily of the reality of his appearance, though at the same time it might be nothing but a spectre of their imagination, and a mere illusion. Let us therefore examine what evidence may be collected from the account given of this appearance, to induce us to think that these women were not deceived; and the evidence, I believe, will be found sufficient. They had the attestation of their sight, their hearing, and their feeling: by the two first the voice and countenance of their Lord might be known; and by the last they might be assured that it was no spectre which they heard and saw, but a body consisting of flesh and bones. One of these proofs, indeed, was wanting to Mary Magdalene,—Christ forbade her to touch him; and yet, any one, who considers with due attention the circumstances of this appearance, will find sufficient reason to be persuaded that it was Christ himself who appeared to her. For, 1*st*, He had stood by her some time, had spoken to her, and she had answered him, before she knew him to be Christ: on the contrary, she took him for the gardener; by all which it is manifest, that the spectre, if it was one, was not of her creating.* Her mind was otherwise engaged; and had it been either at leisure, or disposed to raise apparitions, it is most likely she would have called upon some person, with whom she had more acquaintance and concern than a keeper of a garden, whom probably she had never known nor seen before. 2*dly*, He called her by her name, by which as it appeared that he knew her, so did she, it seems, discover him; for turning immediately about, she accosted him with the respectful title of "Rabboni," my master; and, as may be inferred from the ensuing words of Christ, offered to embrace him. His voice and his countenance convinced her that it was Christ himself. 3*dly*, In these words, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to

* See the preceding Section, p. 33.

my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," is contained a most clear proof that it was Christ himself who uttered them. To understand this, it must be remembered, that these words allude to a long discourse (John, xiv. xv. and xvi.) which our Saviour held to his disciples the very night in which he was betrayed; wherein he told them, that he should leave them for a short time, ("a little while, and ye shall not see me,") and that he would come to them again, though but for a short time, ("and again a little while, and ye shall see me,") "because," added he, "I go to my Father." By the phrase, "I go to my Father," Christ meant his final quitting the world, as he himself explained it to his disciples, who did not then understand either of the above-cited expressions. "I came forth from the Father," says he, "and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father," John, xvi. 28. But lest they should fall into despair at being thus forsaken by him, for whom they had forsaken all the world, he at the same time promised to send them a Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, who should "teach them all things, bring to their minds whatsoever he had said unto them," (xiv. 26;) "should guide them into all truth, shew them things to come," (xvi. 13.) "and abide with them for ever;" (xiv. 16.) and that "whoever believed in him should be able to do greater works (that is, miracles) than he did, because he was to go to the Father," (xvi. 12.) and that, finally, though they for a season should be sorrowful, yet should "their sorrow be turned into joy, and that joy should no man take from them," John, xvi. 20, 22. These were magnificent promises; promises which, as the disciples could not but remember Christ had made to them, so they might be assured that no one but Christ was able to make them good; and therefore, when they came to reflect seriously upon the import of these words, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," it was impossible for them to conclude otherwise than that it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke to Mary Magdalene. For as the latter expression, "I ascend to my Father," &c. implied a remembrance, and consequently a renewal of those promises, which were to take place after his ascension to the Father; so did the former, "I am not yet ascended to my Father," give them encouragement to expect the performance of that other promise of his coming to them again before his ascension, by giving them to understand, that he had not yet quitted this world; and I take Christ's forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch (or embrace) him, to have been meant as a signification of his intending to see her and his disciples again; just as, in ordinary life, when one friend says to another, "Don't take leave, for I am not going yet," he means to let him know that he purposes to see him again before he sets out upon his journey. That this is the true import of the words "Touch me not," is, in my opinion, evident, not only from the reason subjoined in the words immediately following, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father," (by which expression, as I have shewed above, Christ meant he had not finally quitted the world,) but from these farther considerations: Christ, by shewing himself first to Mary Magdalene, intended, doubtless, to give her a distinguishing mark of his favour, and therefore cannot reasonably be supposed to have designed at the same time to have put a slight upon her, by refusing her a pleasure which he granted not long after to the other Mary and Salome; and yet this must be supposed, if "Touch me not" be understood to imply a prohibition to Mary Magdalene to embrace him, for any reason consistent with the regard shewn to the other women, and different from that now contended for, namely, because he intended to see her and his disciples again. On the contrary, if these words be taken to signify a put-off to some fitter opportunity, they will be so far from importing any unkindness or reprehension to Mary Magdalene, that they may rather be looked upon as a gracious assurance, a kind of friendly engagement to come to her again; and in this sense they correspond exactly with Christ's purpose in sending this message by her to his disciples; which, as I have observed before, was to let them know that he remembered his promise of coming to them again, and was still in a condition to perform it, not having quitted this world; and of his intention to perform it, this his refusing to admit the affectionate or reverential embraces of "Mary Magdalene, who loved much, for much had been forgiven to her," was an earnest, as his coming to them again would be a pledge of his resolution to acquit himself in due time of those promises, which were not to take effect till after his final departure out of this world. And thus will this whole discourse of our Saviour to Mary Magdalene be in all its parts intelligible, rational, and coherent; whereas, if it be supposed that Mary Magdalene was forbidden to touch Christ for some mystical reason, contained in the words, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father," it will be very difficult to understand either the meaning or intent of that message, which she was commanded to carry to the disciples; and still more difficult to account for his suffering, not long after, the embraces of the other Mary and Salome. To the same, or even greater difficulties, will that interpretation of this passage be liable, which

supposes, that the prohibtion to Mary Magdalene was grounded upon the spiritual nature of Christ's body, which, it is presumed, was not sensible to touch or feeling. And indeed, both these reasons for the behaviour of Christ to Mary Magdalene are overturned, by his contrary behaviour to the other Mary and Salome. But if the sense I contend for be admitted, it will be no difficult matter to account for this difference of his behaviour on those two occasions. Why he forbade Mary Magdalene to touch him, has already been explained; why he permitted the other Mary and Salome "to hold him by the feet and worship him," I shall now endeavour to shew. These last mentioned women, as Saint Mark informs us, were so terrified and amazed at the sight and words of the angel who appeared to them in the sepulchre, that, although they (Matt. xxviii. 8,) ran with a design to tell the disciples what they had heard and seen, as the angel had commanded them, yet, through the greatness of their confusion and disorder, they had neglected to deliver this important message to some whom they saw in their way; for so, with all the commentators, I understand these words of Saint Mark, "neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid."* That this testimony therefore of the angel to the resurrection of Christ, and the assurance given to the two disciples, that they should see their master in Galilee, might not be lost either by the women's forgetting, through the greatness of their amazement, what the angel had said to them, or, through a suspicion of its having been all a mere illusion, neglecting or scrupling to tell it, Christ himself thought proper to appear to them, to calm their minds, disperse their terror, obviate their doubts. With this view, he first accosts them with the gracious salutation of All hail! then suffers them not only to approach him, but to "hold him by the feet and worship him;" and lastly, bidding them dismiss their fears, orders them, in confirmation of what the angel had said to them, to tell his disciples from him to "go into Galilee," assuring them with his own mouth, "that they should see him there." Every word, we see, tended to inspire them with courage and confidence; and the gracious influence of every word upon their minds, could not but be rendered still more powerful and efficacious by his suffering them to embrace him. After this familiar instance of his favour and complacence, and this sensible proof of his being really and bodily risen from the dead, there could be no room left for doubt or terror: conviction, certainty, and joy, must have banished those uneasy passions for ever from their breasts. And hence it appears, that the different conduct of Christ on these two occasions, was owing to the different circumstances attending them; to which it was most wisely suited. Mary Magdalene's grief (the only disorder of mind she then laboured under) for the supposed loss of her master's body, was soon dispersed, upon her hearing him call her by her name, and seeing him stand by her; she was immediately convinced that it was Christ, and testified her conviction by giving him the title of Rabboni, my master. She wanted not (and therefore there was no need of giving her) any farther proofs; but satisfied with what she had seen and heard, she went to the disciples, and told them she "had seen the Lord," and that he had said such and such things to her. But terror, the most untractable of all passions, when excessive, had seized upon the other Mary and Salome—a terror which, as it proceeded from the unexpected and supernatural appearance of an angel, was more likely to be confirmed than removed by the like appearance of Christ, had he not proceeded gently with them, and by his gracious words and demeanour given them encouragement and permission to familiarize themselves with him by degrees, and take, in their own way, what proofs they thought proper to remove their fears or doubts, and convince them that their affectionate and beloved master was in reality restored to them again from the grave.

But besides the assurance given by Christ to his disciples, in the words here spoken by Mary Magdalene, of his intention to perform his

* That these words, "Neither said they any thing to any man," must be limited to some certain time, will, I believe, be readily allowed; for it cannot be imagined, that after all the other appearances of the angels, &c. were published, these women only never opened their lips to any man about what they had seen and heard at the sepulchre. The question then will be, How long they may be supposed to have forborne speaking of it? And this, I think, was no longer than during the time of their flying from the sepulchre, and until they were met by Christ himself; because the only reason here assigned for their "not saying any thing to any man," namely, "for they were afraid," (or affrighted rather,) being removed by Christ's appearing to them, &c. it is reasonable to believe, (if it is not implied,) that their silence lasted no longer than the only cause of it, their terror. Besides, as Saint Mark breaks off the narration of what happened to these women very abruptly, short of Christ's appearing to them, in order to relate his appearance to Mary Magdalene, which indeed was previous to it, though subsequent to the appearance of the angel seen by these women at the sepulchre, what he says of their "not saying any thing to any man" cannot be taken to extend beyond the period where he chose to break off his narration, without supposing him guilty of a needless impropriety. And if these words, "Neither said they any thing to any man," be construed to signify that they did not tell what they had seen and heard to some, whom they saw as they were flying from the sepulchre, it seems rational to conclude, that these were some of the disciples to whom they were ordered to deliver the message of the angel, and to whom they would probably have delivered it had they not been under so great a terror and amazement. For had the persons whom they saw been any other than the disciples of Jesus, it is not likely that Saint Mark would have taken any notice of their "not saying any thing to any man," since it is reasonable to imagine they would not, even though they had not been affrighted, have told the message of the angel, &c. to any but the disciples; and as the time of Peter and John's running to the sepulchre, upon the first report of Mary Magdalene, coincides with that of these women flying from it, it is no improbable conjecture that these were the persons whom they saw in their way, at a distance, perhaps, and coming by a different road to the sepulchre; especially if it be considered that, as the words of Saint Mark, "Neither said they," &c. seem to carry with them an imputation of neglect upon these women, though he at the same time both accounts for it and excuses it, by adding, "for they were affrighted;" so the same evangelist hath before acquainted us (ver. 7,) that they were ordered by the angel to deliver the message he gave them to Peter in particular.

promises of coming to them again, &c. I cannot help thinking he had a farther meaning, which, though not so obvious, is, however, in my opinion, equally deducible from those words with the other just now mentioned. That remarkable expression, I ascend to my Father, Christ undoubtedly made use of upon this occasion to recall to his disciples' minds the discourse he held to them three nights before, in which he explained so clearly what he meant by "going to his Father," that they said to him, "Lo! now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no parable," John, xvi. 29. But this was not the only expression that puzzled them; they were as much in the dark as to the meaning of, "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me," which they likewise confessed they did not understand. But Christ did not think fit to clear up their doubts at that time, and left those words to be expounded by the events to which they severally related, and which were then drawing on apace. For that very night he was betrayed, and seized, and deserted by his disciples, as he himself had foretold but a very few hours before, upon their professing "to believe that he came forth from God:" The next day he was crucified, expired upon the cross, and was buried. Upon this melancholy catastrophe the disciples could be no longer at a loss to understand what Christ meant, when he said to them, "A little while and ye shall not see me." He was gone from them, and, as their fears suggested, gone for ever, notwithstanding he had expressly told them, that he would come to them again; and to those words, "A little while and ye shall not see me," had added, "and again a little while and ye shall see me." This latter expression, one would think, was full as intelligible as the former; and as the one, now expounded by the event, was plainly a prophecy of his death, so must the other be understood as a prophecy of his resurrection from the dead. But if they understood it in that sense, they were very far from having a right notion of the resurrection from the dead; as is evident from their imagining, when Christ first shewed himself to them after his passion, that they saw a spirit; even though they had just before declared their belief "that he was risen indeed, and had appeared to Simon." The resurrection of the body, it should seem from this instance, made no part of their notion of the resurrection from the dead. To lead them therefore into a right understanding of this most important article of faith, Christ, in speaking to Mary Magdalene, and by her to his disciples, makes use of terms which strongly imply his being really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead. "I am not yet," says he, "ascended to my Father; but go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father," &c. The words "I go to my Father," Christ, as has already been observed, explained by the well understood phrase of leaving the world; and to this explanation the words immediately foregoing give so great a light, that it is impossible to mistake his meaning. The whole passage runs thus, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; and again I leave the world, and go to the Father." By the expression, "I am come into the world," Christ certainly meant to signify his being and conversing visibly and bodily upon earth; and therefore by the other expression, "I leave the world," he must have intended to denote the contrary to all this, namely, his ceasing to be and converse visibly and bodily upon earth; and so undoubtedly the disciples understood him to mean, when they said unto him, "Now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no parable." But as they very well knew that the usual road, by which all men quitted this world, lay through the gates of death, and were assured their master had trodden that irremeable path, they might naturally conclude, that what he had said to them about "leaving the world and going to his Father," was accomplished in his death; and consistently with that notion might imagine that, by his coming to them again, no more was intended, than his appearing to them in the same manner as many persons have been thought and said to appear after their decease. To guard against this double error, which Christ, to whom the thoughts of all hearts are open, perceived in the minds of his disciples, he plainly intimates to them in the words, "I am not yet ascended to my Father, but—I do (or shall) ascend to my Father," that his dying, and his final leaving the world, were distinct things; the latter of which was still to come, though the former was past. He had indeed died like other mortals, and had, like them, left the world for a season, as he himself had often foretold them should come to pass; but he was now risen from the dead, returned into the world, and should not leave it finally till he ascended to his Father. Of his being returned into the world, his appearing to Mary Magdalene was doubtless intended for a proof; and yet of this it could be no proof at all, if what she saw was no more than what is commonly called a spirit; since the spirits of many people have been thought to appear after their decease, who notwithstanding are supposed to have as effectually left this world by their death, as those who have never appeared at all. Lazarus, like Christ, had died, and was by his quickening word recalled to life, which consists in the animation of the body by its union with the soul. Now, had Christ called up nothing but the spirit of Lazarus, and left his body to putrify and perish in the grave, would not Lazarus, I ask, have still been reputed dead, and consequently considered as out of

this world, though his spirit had appeared to a thousand different people? If Christ therefore was risen from the dead, as the angels affirmed he was; if he had not yet finally left the world, as the words, "I am not yet ascended to my Father," plainly import; and if his appearing to Mary Magdalene was intended for a proof of those two points, as undoubtedly it was: it will follow that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead; that he was still in the world in the same manner as when he "came forth from the Father, and came into the world;" and that it was he himself, and not a spirit without flesh and bones, that appeared to Mary Magdalene.

Before I conclude this argument, I must beg leave to make one observation more upon the term "ascend," twice used by our Saviour in the compass of these few words. In the discourse here alluded to by Christ, he told his disciples that he should go to his Father, and he now bids Mary Magdalene tell them that he should "ascend" to his Father, — a variation in the phrase which, I am persuaded, had its particular meaning, and that not very difficult to be discovered. For, as by the former expression he intended, as we have seen, to signify in general his final departure out of this world, so by the latter is the particular manner of that departure intimated; and doubtless with a view of letting his disciples know the precise time, after which they should no longer expect to see and converse with him upon earth, but wait for the coming of that Comforter, which he promised to send them in his room; and who, unless he departed from them, was not to come. Jesus made frequent visits to his disciples after his passion, (Acts, i. 3,) "being seen of them," says Saint Luke, "forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Between some of these visits were pretty long intervals, (John, xx. 21,) during which he seems to have disappeared, that is, not to have resided upon earth. Had Christ, therefore, left his disciples without any mark or token, by which they might be able to distinguish his final departure from those that were only temporary, they would probably have taken each visit for the last; or have lingered, after his final departure, in a fruitless expectation of seeing him again; either of which states of uncertainty, and especially the last, were liable to many inconveniencies, to doubts, and jealousies, and fears, which it was goodness, as well as wisdom in our Saviour to prevent. Nor was the preventing these evils the only advantage that flowed from this early intimation of the manner of Christ's final departure out of this world, implied in the words, "I ascend to my Father," and verified in his ascension into heaven. For as this could not have been effected without the power of God co-operating with him, so neither could it have been fore-known by him, without the communication of that Spirit, which only knows the counsels of God. When the disciples, therefore, beheld their master taken up into heaven, and received out of their sight by a cloud of glory, * they could not but know assuredly, that this was the event foretold about forty days before to Mary Magdalene; and knowing that, could no longer doubt whether it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke those prophetic words to her, how little credit soever they had given to her, when she first told them she "had seen the Lord."

And thus, (as I have endeavoured to make appear,) in these comprehensive words of Christ, spoken to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father," are implied three particulars. *1st*, A renewal of the several promises made by him to his disciples, the night in which he was betrayed; one of which was the promise of coming to them again before his final departure out of this world: of his intention to perform which promise, I take his forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch or embrace him, to be an earnest or token. *2dly*, An intimation, that as his death and his final departure out of this world were two distinct things, the latter of which was yet to come; so by his rising from the dead, they were to understand his returning and being in the world, in the same manner with those who have not yet quitted the world by death, and consequently that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead; of which his appearing to Mary Magdalene, and saying those words, was an undoubted evidence. And, *3dly*, A prophetical account of the manner of his departing finally out of the world, namely, by ascending into heaven. From which several particulars it was impossible, as I said before, for the disciples to draw any other conclusion than that it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke to Mary Magdalene. I do not say the disciples must necessarily have perceived, at the very first hearing these words, the several inferences which I have drawn from them; but when they came to consider them attentively, to reflect upon what their master had said to them, the night in which he was betrayed, (to which these words evidently referred,) and when, after having handled his feet and hands, they were by their own senses convinced that he was bodily risen from the dead; and lastly, when they had seen those words, "I ascend to my Father," verified in his ascending into heaven before their eyes: then, I think, they could hardly avoid perceiving the several inferences, and drawing

* Acts, i. 9. See Whitby on this place.

from them the conclusion above mentioned. For if it was not Christ who appeared to Mary Magdalene, it must have been either some spirit, good or bad; or some man who, to impose upon her, counterfeited the person and voice of Christ; or lastly, the whole must have been forged and invented by her. The first of these suppositions is blasphemous, the second absurd, and the third improbable. For allowing her to have been capable of making a lie, for the carrying on an imposture, from which she could reap no benefit, and to have been informed of what our Saviour had spoken to his disciples the night in which he was betrayed, which does not appear, it must have been either extreme madness or folly in her to put the credit of her tale upon events, such as the appearing of Christ to his disciples, and his ascending into heaven, which were so far from being in the number of contingencies, that they were not even within the powers and operations of what are called natural causes.

The same answer may be made to the supposition, that the appearance of Christ to the other Mary and Salome was likewise a forgery of those women; and with this I shall conclude the second head.

Sect. XV. — 3*d*, Of the many appearances of Christ to his disciples, for the forty days after his passion, the sacred writers have mentioned particularly but very few; imagining, doubtless, those few sufficient to prove that fundamental article of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus. And, indeed, whoever attends to the nature and variety of the evidence contained even in those few particulars which they have transmitted to us, cannot, I think, but acknowledge that those, who were appointed to be the witnesses of the resurrection, had every kind of proof that, in the like circumstances, either the most scrupulous could demand, or the most incredulous imagine. This I doubt not but to be able to make appear in the course of the following observations; in which I shall confine myself to the examination of those appearances only, whose circumstances the evangelical historians have thought proper to record, and upon which the faith of the apostles was principally established.

The first of these, though but barely mentioned by Saint Mark, (xvi.) is very particularly related by Saint Luke (xxiv.) in the following words: "And behold, two of them went the same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs; and they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them: but their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said to him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him: but we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

Two objections have been made to the credibility of this fact: 1*st*, That these disciples knew not Jesus during the whole time of his walking, conversing, and sitting at meat with them; 2*dly*, That when, upon his breaking bread, &c. their eyes were opened, and they are said to have known him, he vanished so suddenly out of their sight, that they seem not to have had time enough to satisfy those doubts, which must have arisen from their having conversed with him so long without knowing him. To the first of these objections

the evangelist himself furnishes us with an answer, telling us, that "their eyes were holden that they should not know him;" which, as it will not be pretended to be above the operation of him whom the apostle of the Gentiles styles "the power of God," so have I already shewed it to be a proceeding not unworthy of him whom the same inspired writer, in the same place, calls also "the wisdom of God." He threw a mist before their corporeal eyes, that he might, by the pure and unprejudiced light of reason only, remove from before their internal sight, that strong delusion, which held their understanding from knowing the true import of those types and prophecies, by which his sufferings, death, and resurrection, were foreshewn. He disguised himself, but laid open the Scriptures, which till then had appeared to them in another form; and having, by an exposition of Moses and the prophets, which made their hearts burn within them, stript off those vails and colours, which the worldly and carnal-minded scribes and pharisees had laid over them, and set them before their eyes in their genuine shape and lustre, he in the next place disclosed himself, and left them convinced, as well from the Scriptures, as from their senses, that he was risen from the dead. Which leads me to consider the second objection, founded on his vanishing out of their sight so soon after his discovering himself to them.

And here I shall observe, 1*st*, That it appears they had no doubt but that the person who joined them on the way to Emmaus, and opened the Scriptures to them, was the same whom, upon his breaking of bread, &c. they took to be Jesus. 2*dly*, That upon their taking him to be Jesus, they must have been sensible of some alteration, either in themselves or in him, by which they were enabled to discover the mistake they were under while they knew him not. 3*dly*, That alteration must to them have appeared supernatural and miraculous, as it is implied to have been in this phrase, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him;" as must also his vanishing (or disappearing) from their sight. And as from these particulars it could not but be evident to them, that the person whom, when their eyes were opened, they, from his countenance, &c. knew to be Jesus, was endowed with powers more than human; so was it impossible for them to conclude it to be any other than Jesus himself, without blasphemously supposing that God would permit any spirit, whether good or bad, to assume the person of his beloved Son, with a view of countenancing or carrying on a falsehood and imposture; especially as, in the conversation he had held with them by the way, he had opened the Scriptures, and had shewed them from Moses and all the prophets, that Christ was to suffer, and die, and rise again from the dead. But besides the clearing up all their doubts, arising from his sufferings and death, which had staggered their faith in him whom, till then, "they trusted to be him who should redeem Israel," it is very probable, from what they say about their "hearts burning within them while he opened to them the Scriptures," that they perceived, either in his manner or in his doctrine, some lively marks and characters of that dignity and authority which was wont to distinguish him so much from the ordinary teachers of Israel, the scribes and pharisees. And, not to repeat what I have said before, about the probability of Christ's having upon this occasion made use of some gesture or phrase peculiar to himself, in breaking and blessing the bread, I shall only add one remark from Grotius,* namely, that since it was the custom among the Jews, for the master of the feast, or the most honourable guest, immediately after blessing the cup, to take the bread, give thanks over it, break it, and after eating a bit of it, to distribute it round the table, Christ, by this action, declared himself something more than what those disciples had hitherto taken him for, a stranger and traveller whom they had picked up by the way, and constrained to abide with them; and by that declaration awakened their attention to that discovery of himself which followed immediately upon it, and to which this solemn and religious act was certainly no improper introduction. The inference that is naturally deducible from these several observations, is, that these two disciples, even upon the supposition that Christ disappeared immediately after their eyes were opened, and they knew him, had sufficient reason to be assured that it was he himself who had walked, conversed, and sat at meat with them; and consequently that he was risen from the dead, according to what the angels had told the women, who had been that morning at the sepulchre.

Sect. XVI.—The next appearance of Christ, that I shall take notice of, and that to which all those before mentioned were preparatory, was to the eleven, and those with them, on the evening of the same day. This appearance is mentioned by three of the evangelists, one relating one particular, and another another; out of each of whose gospels I shall therefore take such circumstances as are not related by the others, and putting the scattered parts together, compose from all of them one entire relation.

"Then the same day," namely, the day of the resurrection, "at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of

* In locum. See also Drusius, ibid.

the Jews," (John, xx. 19.) "while they sat at meat," (Mark, xvi. 14,) immediately after the two disciples from Emmaus had finished their relation, "came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be with you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." (Luke, xxiv. 37.) "And he, upbraiding them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen him after he was risen, (Mark, xvi. 14,) "said unto them, Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said to them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb; and he took it, and did eat before them," (Luke, xxiv. 38—43.) "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord," (John, xx. 20.) And he said to them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me." (Luke, xxiv. 44.) "Then, breathing on them, and saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost," (John, xx. 22,) "opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures; and he said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer; and to rise from the dead the third day. And ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke, xxiv. 45, 46.)

To this I shall add the appearance of Christ to Saint Thomas, that I may bring all the proofs of the resurrection under one view. "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, We have seen the Lord: But he said to them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God! Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John, xx. 24—29.)

The proofs of Christ's being risen from the dead, here exhibited to the disciples, as set forth in the above-cited passages, may be comprised under four heads. 1*st*, The testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen. 2*dly*, The evidences of their own senses. 3*dly*, The exact accomplishment of the "words which he had spoken to them, while he was yet with them." And 4*thly*, The fulfilling "of all the things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him." The conclusiveness of all which proofs I shall endeavour to shew in some observations upon each of them. Upon the first I have nothing to add to what I have written already under the second general head,* and the beginning of this, excepting that our Lord, by upbraiding his disciples for not believing those who had seen him after he was risen, took from them all possibility of doubting afterwards of the truth and reality of those appearances, thus confirmed and verified by his own irrefragable testimony. Under the words, "those who had seen him after he was risen," is comprehended likewise his appearance to Simon, mentioned both by Saint Luke, xxiv. 34, and Saint Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 5, as also that to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Upon the second head, (namely, the evidence of their own senses) it might, one would imagine, be thought sufficient to observe, that the disciples had the same infallible proofs † (as the author of the Acts calls them) of Christ's being alive after his passion, as they had ever had of his being alive before it. They saw him, saw the particular marks of identity in his person and countenance, in his hands, feet, and side, which had been pierced at his crucifixion; and one of them, who had refused to believe, "except he put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hands into his side," had that farther satisfaction, unreasonable as it was, granted him; they saw him also eat, what they themselves gave him, "a piece of a broiled fish and an honey-comb;" they heard him speak, and were by him commanded to "handle him," and see that he had flesh and bones; a command, ‡ which, doubtless, they obeyed. And yet all these infallible tokens, or proofs, these Τεκμήρια, *certa et indubitata signa*, have been set aside by some pretended philosophers and philosophizing divines, upon no better grounds than their own vain inferences from these words of Saint John, "Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst:" For taking for granted, what as philosophers it better became

* See the 2*d* head, of the appearances of Christ to the women, p. 35; and the 3*d*, of his appearance to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, p. 40.

† Acts. i. 3. ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις, by many certain and undoubted proofs or tokens. Quintilian from Aristotle says Τεκμήρια are *indubitata et certissima signa*, as the actions of speaking, walking, eating, and drinking are the Τεκμήρια "undoubted signs" of life.

‡ The words "as ye see me have," strongly imply, that they had received the satisfaction offered them by feeling his hands and feet.

them to have proved, that it is suggested in these words that Jesus passed through the walls, or doors, while they remained shut, without either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change, during his so passing; and having discovered, "that for one solid or material body to pass through another solid or material body, without injuring the form of either, both the passive and passing body remaining the same, is contrary to all the laws of nature," they have concluded, that the body of Christ was not real, that is, a material body, and consequently was incapable of being felt by Saint Thomas, &c. From whence it will follow that the whole story is absurd and false.

In answer to this, I deny that the words, "Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst," imply that "Jesus passed through the walls or doors, while they remained shut, without either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change during his so passing." They seem, indeed, to imply, that he came in miraculously, though not by a miracle that contains a contradiction or impossibility; and I am persuaded that had not Saint John intended to signify that he came in miraculously, he would not twice have mentioned that otherwise trifling circumstance of "the doors being shut." But though a denial without proof be a proper and sufficient answer to an assertion without proof, yet I will give some reasons why the interpretation contended for by these philosophers cannot be the true one. *1st*, It is not to be presumed, that Saint John, who with the other disciples had received sensible evidence of the reality—that is, the materiality—of Christ's body, should be absurd enough to imagine, at the same time, that it was a spiritual body; which he must have done, had he thought that Jesus passed through the walls or doors, while they remained shut, without either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change, during his so passing; it required no great depth of philosophy to understand it to be impossible, even to Omnipotence, to cause the body of a man to penetrate through a wall or door, without causing some change or alteration in the one or the other. Neither, *2dly*, is it to be presumed that Saint John, intending, as it is plain he did by relating the story of Saint Thomas, to acquaint the world that he [Thomas] as well as the other disciples, had, by feeling and examining his master's body, sensible evidence of his being really—that is, bodily—risen from the dead, should be weak enough to insert in his relation a circumstance which tended to prove that the body which Saint Thomas is supposed to have felt, was not a material but a spiritual body, and consequently incapable of being felt and handled. Contradictions and absurdities are not to be presumed in any writer. On the contrary, as it is supposed that every man in his senses has some meaning in what he speaks or writes, so by that meaning only (which is best collected from the drift and tenor of the whole discourse) is the sense of any ambiguous word or sentence in it to be determined; and every interpretation of such ambiguous word or sentence as can be shewn to be inconsistent with the plain meaning of the speaker or writer, is, for that reason, to be rejected. This justice, candour, and common sense require. *3dly*, By the way of reasoning made use of upon this occasion by these free-reasoning philosophers, the spirituality of the walls, or doors, may as well be inferred as the spirituality of Christ's body; for Christ's body being proved to be material, by being handled by his disciples, &c. and it being admitted that he penetrated through the walls or doors while they remained shut, without suffering, &c. it will follow that the walls or doors had spiritual bodies; since it is contrary to the laws of nature, that one solid or material body should pass, &c.—an argument which would have very well become the philosophical answer to the "Trial of the Witnesses," as being sophistical, ludicrous, and absurd.

Having now given my reasons for rejecting, as false, the interpretation above mentioned, which some have endeavoured to fix upon these words of Saint John, "Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst;" and having also allowed, that those words naturally suggest the entrance of our Saviour to have been miraculous; I shall in the next place attempt to shew that the miracle here wrought by Jesus, instead of awakening in the minds of the disciples any suspicion that their senses might have been imposed upon in the examination they took of their Lord's body, (because it is as easy for a power that can control the laws of nature, to excite in us the ideas of hearing, seeing, and feeling, without the real existence of any object of those sensations, as to open a passage for a human body through walls or doors, without making any visible breach in them; this miracle, I say, instead of raising any such suspicion in the disciples,) tended, on the contrary, to remove all their doubts, and convince them effectually that it was Jesus himself in a body consisting of flesh and bones, and not a spirit, which appeared to them.

The disciples, during their conversation with Christ before his passion, had been accustomed to see him work miracles of various kinds, cast out devils, heal all manner of diseases, give sight to the blind, elocution to the dumb, legs and nerves to the lame and paralytic, and life to the dead; and all this by a word, which they had also seen even the winds and seas obey. From this extensive power of controlling the laws of nature,

established by the great Creator himself, joined to the more than human purity of his life and doctrine, the disciples most rationally concluded that he "came forth from God." And therefore as, on the one hand, the power of working miracles was a characteristical mark of Jesus, and consequently his working miracles after his resurrection was one evidence of the identity of his person; so, on the other hand, was the assurance of his coming "forth from the God of truth," founded upon his doing such works "as no man could do unless God was with him," an infallible security to the disciples against the suspicion of his intending to impose upon them. From whence it will follow, that when, upon their fancying they saw a spirit, he assured them it was he himself, and no spirit, which, (says he,) "hath not flesh and bones," as they, by feeling and handling him, "saw he had," they could have no shadow of a pretence either for disbelieving his word, or distrusting their own senses. For, in reality, doth not his appealing to their senses for a confirmation of what he asserted, (namely, that it was he himself and not a spirit,) imply an affirmation that their senses were the proper judges of the point in question, and that he therefore left the determination of it to them? And are not both the parts of this affirmation absolutely false, if it be supposed that the body here assumed by Christ was a spiritual, that is, an immaterial body? And if, instead of the object upon which they were to judge, (namely, a material body, capable of exciting such and such sensations,) a very different thing was substituted, namely, a mere idea of such an object, occasioned by the illusory and suborned evidence of sensations imprinted on their minds by a miraculous power; would not, I say, an appeal, to the judgment of their senses in this case, have been a mockery? And would not the imposing upon their senses, after such an appeal, have been fraudulent and dishonest? And would not such a proceeding have been absurd as well as dishonest? For, if it be allowed that Jesus had the power of imposing miraculously upon the senses of his disciples, it will not surely be denied that he had the power of entering miraculously into the chamber, where they were assembled, while "the doors were shut." The latter of these two miracles renders the first unnecessary. For if Jesus could in his human body enter into the chamber, while the doors were shut, there was no occasion for him to impose upon the senses of his disciples. And if he had it in his option to work whichever of those miracles he pleased, would it not have been absurd (with reverence be it spoken!) in him to choose that, which was inconsistent with the character of one who "came forth from the God of truth, and directly opposite to the design of his appearing to his disciples after his passion; which was, by offering his body to the examination of their senses, to convince them that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead?

The disciples, therefore, who by the mighty signs and wonders done by him before his passion, were convinced that God was with him, could not, upon this occasion, but draw the same conclusion from his entering miraculously into the room while the doors were shut, and as miraculously perceiving the secret doubts and reasonings of their hearts. And though, not understanding what was meant by rising from the dead, they had at first suspected him to be a spirit; yet, having been satisfied of the contrary by handling his body, they had no more reason to distrust the evidence of their senses, than they had formerly, when, after having seen him "walk upon the waves," (Matt. xiv.) and having from thence fallen into the like imagination of his being a spirit, they had been convinced of their mistake by the same kind of proof, namely, by seeing, hearing, and feeling him, eating and conversing with him in the same manner as with other men. And indeed there is no intimation in the sacred writers of their having had, upon either of these occasions, any suspicion of fraud or imposture. They were simple plain men, strangers to vain and visionary speculations; and went upon those grounds upon which all men act, however some may talk, who have reasoned themselves out of all the principles of reason. Having, therefore, throughout all their past lives, trusted to the information of their senses, they could not avoid believing them upon the present occasion, especially when they were commanded to believe them, by one whose transcendent knowledge and power manifested him to have a thorough insight into the frame of man, as well as a supreme authority over the laws of nature.

Sect. XVII. — *3dly*, The exact accomplishment of the words, in which our Saviour foretold to his disciples his sufferings, death, and resurrection, will evidently appear by comparing the words of those prophecies with the several circumstances of those events. And, therefore, to enable the reader to make this comparison with the greater ease, I shall first set down the several particulars of the passion, and death, &c. of Christ, and then produce the prophecies corresponding to them.

The sufferings of Jesus, properly so called, took their beginning from the treachery of Judas, one of the twelve, who, (as it is related by all the evangelists, Matt. xxvi. Mark, xiv. Luke, xxii. John, xviii.) having received a band of soldiers, &c. from the chief priests, with whom he had bargained for thirty pieces

of silver to deliver him up, went with them to a garden, whither he knew Christ was accustomed to resort, and there, by the sign agreed on, (a kiss,) having pointed him out, put him into their hands, who seizing on him immediately, carried him before the high priest, &c.

This fact was several times foretold by Jesus, at first more obscurely, as in these words, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil," (John, vi. 70,) διάβολος, an informer; and in these, "The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men," (Matt. xvii. 22,) and in others of the same general import; then more plainly at his last supper, to his disciples, who, upon his saying, "Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me, were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say to him, Lord is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark, xiv. 18; Luke, xxii. 21.) In answer to which he said, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish the same shall betray me." These words, as Grotius* observes, must be taken to come somewhat nearer to a declaration of the person who was to betray Jesus, than those others, "One of you shall betray me:" "Wherefore," adds that learned commentator, "I am persuaded that Judas sat near to Christ, so as to eat out of the same dish or mess with him, there being several dishes or messes on the table." This conjecture is indeed very probable, and gives great light to this whole matter: upon which we may observe still farther, that as the disciples, even after this declaration, were still in doubt of whom he spake, (John, xiii. 22,) it is evident there must have been others besides Judas, who dipped their hands in the same dish with Jesus, otherwise that description had sufficiently made him known, and there had been no occasion for Simon Peter to have beckoned to that disciple, who was leaning on the bosom of Jesus, that he should ask him of whom he spoke? In compliance, therefore, with this demand made to him by Saint John, in the name of all his disciples, and to put an end at once to all their doubts, Jesus told them he would point out the very person to them, saying, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it; and when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon;" who, appearing surprised at being thus pronounced a traitor, either for his farther satisfaction, or to dissemble the wickedness of his heart, himself asked Jesus, if it was he: To whom Jesus answered, "Thou sayest." "And thus" concludes Grotius, "Christ gave proofs of his fore-knowledge by degrees; first including the future traitor in the number of the twelve; then in the lesser number of those who sat next to him; and lastly, by certain and precise marks, pointing out the very person himself." To which I must add, that in order to imprint this prophecy strongly on the minds of his disciples, he introduced it with applying to himself a passage of the Psalms, (xli. 9,) "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me;" and with these remarkable words, "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am he."

2. The next incident is the desertion of the disciples, who, as we learn both from Saint Matthew, (xxvi. 56,) and Saint Mark, (xiv. 50,) upon their master's being seized by the soldiers and servants of the chief priest, who came with Judas, all immediately forsook him and fled.

Of this their desertion Jesus had forewarned them but a very short time before it came to pass, and that in the very pride and confidence of their faith upon their professing to believe that "he came forth from God;" "Then saith Jesus to them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night," or as it is in Saint John, "shall be scattered every man to his own home; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," Matt. xxvi. 31, Mark, xiv. 27, compared with John, xvi. 32.

3. The third particular is Peter's disowning Christ, recorded in all the evangelists, by whose accounts it appears, that Peter followed Christ at a distance to the palace of the high priest, was let into the court by the means of Saint John, who "spake to her that kept the door, and brought in Peter;" where, standing among the crowd while his master was under examination, he was three several times charged by some who were about him with belonging to Christ, which he as often denied, affirming, with oaths and imprecations, that he did not so much as know him; and immediately after his third denial the cock crew; "and then the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly," (Luke, xxii. 61.) The prophecy is as follows: "Verily I say to thee (Peter,) this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny (or disown) me thrice, (Mark, xiv. 30.) Here we see the nature, the time, and the repetitions of Peter's offence precisely defined and limited. And I take the suddenness and sincerity of his return to his former faith in his master, implied in his weeping bitterly upon the recollection of his crime, and of his master's words, to be fore-signified in this passage of Saint Luke, (xxii. 31, 32,) "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou

* See Grotius, in loc.

art converted, (ἐπιστρέψας, returned back again to the faith,) strengthen thy brethren."

4. The fourth event foretold by Christ, is his being delivered to the high priests, and by them to Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, together with many particulars of his sufferings, from that time to his crucifixion. All which things are related by the evangelists, as follows:

Matt. xxvi. 57; Mark, xiv. 53. "And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled;" who, after having examined some witnesses, from whose evidence nothing criminal could be made out against him, at length "adjured him by the living God to tell them, whether he was the Christ the Son of God." To him Jesus saith, "Thou hast said. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy, what farther need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard his blasphemy: What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy to us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?"

Matt. xxvii. 2. "And when they had bound him, they led him away to Pontius Pilate the (Roman) governor;" who, overcome by the clamours of a tumultuous multitude, at last delivered him to be crucified, after having declared him innocent five several times, and endeavoured in vain to prevail upon the Jews to let him go free, or to be contented with his having scourged him. Ver. 27. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered to him the whole band of soldiers; and they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe; and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail king of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him."

The words, in which many of these particulars were foretold, are these:—"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him," (Matt. xx. 18.) In Saint Mark, (x. 34,) it is, "They," the Gentiles, "shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him." In Saint Luke, (xviii. 32,) "For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on, and they shall scourge him, and put him to death." Of his sufferings from the elders and chief priests he spoke in these words:—"From that time forth began Jesus to shew to his disciples how he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed," &c. (Matt. xvi. 21.)

5. His crucifixion and death are mentioned in every one of the last-cited passages, and in many others up and down the evangelists, either in express words, or in figures and allusions, which I think it is not necessary to insert, no more than the relation of those events, which are too well known to be disputed.

One proof, however, of his death I shall here beg leave to mention, because it has not been much attended to by common readers. Saint John, (xix. 33, 34,) after having related that the soldiers brake the legs of the two thieves, who were crucified with Jesus, adds, "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water; and he that saw it bare record," &c. Upon these words Beza makes the following observation:—"Among the reasons that induced Saint John to assert this fact with so much emphasis, this ought not to be passed over, which Erasmus also touches upon; namely, that by this wound the death of Christ is fully proved. For the water flowing out of that wound in the side, was an indication of the spear's having penetrated the pericardium, in which that water is lodged, and which being wounded, every animal must necessarily die immediately. This fact therefore was inserted to obviate the calumnies of the enemies of the truth, who might otherwise pretend that Jesus was taken down from the cross before he was dead, and thence call in question the reality of his resurrection from the dead."

6. Of his rising from the dead I need not here again produce the proofs, having set them forth so copiously in all the preceding parts of this discourse; but concerning the evidence of his rising precisely on "the third day," I think it proper here to add an observation or two. That he did not rise before the third day is evident, from what Saint Matthew relates of the watch or guard being set at the door of the sepulchre. The passage is this: (xxvii. 62—64,) "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and pharisees came together to Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, whilst he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again: Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say to the people, he is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first," &c. From these words I observe, 1*st*, That the watch or guard was set at the sepulchre the next day

after the death and burial of Christ. *2dly*, It is most probable this was done on what we call the evening of that day; because that was a "high-day," not only a Sabbath, but the Passover; and it can hardly be imagined that the chief priests, and especially the pharisees, who pretended to greater strictness and purity than any other sect of the Jews, should, before the religious duties of the day were over, defile themselves by going to Pilate; for that they were scrupulous upon that point appears from what Saint John (xviii. 28) says of their not entering into the hall of judgment (the prætorium, where Pilate's tribunal was) the day before, "lest they should be defiled," and so kept from eating the Passover. And if it should be said, that the Paschal Lamb being always eaten in the night, all their scruples upon that account were over, and they at liberty to go to Pilate in the morning, or at what other time they pleased; I answer, that allowing the objection, it is still farther to be considered, that this was the Sabbath day; and can it be supposed that the pharisees, who censured Jesus for healing, and his disciples for plucking and eating the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, would profane that day, and defile themselves, not only by going to Pilate, but with the soldiers to the sepulchre of Christ, and setting a seal upon the door of the sepulchre, before the religious duties of that solemn day were past? especially as they were under no kind of necessity of doing it before the evening; though it was highly expedient for them not to delay it beyond that time. Both which points I shall now explain.

Jesus had said, whilst he was yet alive, that he should rise again from the dead on the third day; which prophecy would have been equally falsified by his rising on the first, or second, as on the fourth. If his body therefore was not in the sepulchre at the close of the second day, the chief priests and pharisees would gain their point, and might have asserted boldly, that he was an impostor; from whence it will follow, that it was time enough for them to visit the sepulchre at the close of the second day. On the other hand, as he had declared he should rise on the "third day," it was necessary for them, (if they apprehended what they gave out, that his disciples would come and steal him away,) to guard against any such attempt on that day, and for that day only. And, as the third day began from the evening or shutting in of the second, according to the way of computing used among the Jews, it was as necessary for them not to delay visiting the sepulchre, and setting their guard, till after the beginning of that third day; for if they had come to the sepulchre, though ever so short a time after the third day was begun, and had found the body missing, they could not from thence have proved him an impostor. And accordingly, Saint Matthew tells us, they went thither on the second day, which was the Sabbath; and though the going to Pilate, and, with the Roman soldiers, to the sepulchre, and sealing up the stone, was undoubtedly a profanation of the Sabbath, in the eyes of the ceremonious pharisees, yet might they excuse themselves to their consciences, or (what seems to have been of greater consequence in their opinions) to the world, by pleading the necessity of doing it that day. And surely nothing could have carried them out on such a business, on such a day, but the urgent necessity of doing it then, or not at all. And as I have shewn above, that this urgent necessity could not take place till the close of the second day, and just, though but one moment, before the beginning of the third; it will follow, from what hath been said, that in the estimation of the high priests and pharisees, the day on which they set their guard was the second day; and the next day consequently was the third; to the end of which they requested Pilate to command that the sepulchre might be made sure. Here then we have a proof, furnished by the murderers and blasphemers of Christ themselves, that he was not risen before the third day; for it is to be taken for granted, that before they sealed up the sepulchre, and set the guard, they had inspected it, and seen that the body was still there. Hence also are we enabled to answer the unlearned cavils that have been raised upon these expressions, "three days and three nights," and "after three days." For it is plain that the chief priests and pharisees, by their going to the sepulchre on the Sabbath day, understood that day to be the second; and it is as plain by their setting the guard from that time, and the reason given to Pilate for their so doing, namely, "lest the disciples should come in the night and steal him away," that they construed that day, which was just then beginning, to be the day limited by Christ for his rising from the dead, that is the third day. For had they taken these words of our Saviour, "The Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," in their strict literal sense, they need not have been in such haste to set their guard; since, according to that interpretation, there were yet two days and two nights to come; neither, for the same reason, had they any occasion to apprehend ill consequences from the disciples coming that night and stealing away the body of their master. So that, unless it be supposed that the chief priests and pharisees, the most learned sect among the Jews, did not understand the meaning of a phrase in their own language; or that they were so impious and impolitic as to profane the Sabbath and defile themselves without any occasion; and so senseless and impertinent as to ask a guard of Pilate for watching the sepulchre "that night

and day," to prevent the disciples stealing away the body of Christ the night or the day following; unless, I say, these strange suppositions be admitted, we may fairly conclude that, in the language, and to the understanding of the Jews, "three days and three nights," and "after three days," were equivalent to "three days," or "in three days." That he rose on the third day, the testimony of the angels, and his own appearances to the women, to Simon, and to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, which all happened on that day, are clear and sufficient proofs.

The predictions of Christ, relating to this miraculous event, are many; some of which only I shall here set down, for brevity's sake.

"And as they (the three disciples) came down from the mountain (where Christ had been transfigured) Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead," Matthew, xvii. 9.

"But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee," xxvi. 32.

"From that time forth, began Jesus to shew to his disciples, how that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day," xvi. 21.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him, and the third day he shall rise again," Matt. xx. 18, 19.

I shall defer what remarks I have to make upon these predictions, and their accomplishment, till I come to consider the prophecies contained in the writings of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, relating to the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Christ; for those only belong to the present subject.

Sect. XVIII. — *4thly*, The fourth evidence appealed to by our Saviour, was the testimony of the Scriptures; in which are contained, not only the promises of a Messiah, and Saviour of the world, but the marks and descriptions by which he was to be known. Of these there are so many, and those so various, so seemingly incompatible in one and the same person, and exhibited under such a multitude of types and figures, that as it was absurd for a mere mortal to pretend to answer the character of the Messiah in all points, so was it difficult to those who, by some expressions of the prophets, were filled with the idea of a glorious, powerful, and triumphant deliverer, to understand the intimation given in others of his sufferings and death. But this difficulty proceeds rather from the prejudices and blindness of the interpreters, than from any degree of obscurity in the latter more than in the former. His sufferings and death, and his offering himself up as a sacrifice for sin, are as plainly set forth in the writings of the prophets, and in the types of the Mosaical ceremonies, as his power and his priesthood: And if the Jews, and even the disciples, possessed with the like vain and carnal imaginations, turned their views and expectations to the one, and overlooked the other, it was owing to their mistaking the nature of his kingdom, and the end and design of his priestly office. This, I doubt not, might be made appear by comparing the several types and prophecies together, but would carry me too far from my present purpose, which is only to shew, that the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Christ, were foretold in the types and predictions contained in the books of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms; and to derive from thence another proof in favour of the resurrection.

The first prophecy relating to this subject in the books of Moses, and the first indeed that was ever given to man, is that recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, and the 15th verse, in these words, "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Upon this prophecy, I shall beg leave to quote a passage out of the Bishop of Salisbury's most admirable discourses, "Of the Use and Intent of Prophecy in the several Ages of the World," Dis. III. p. 57. "Let us consider the history of Moses, as we should do any other ancient eastern history of the like antiquity: suppose, for instance, that this account of the fall had been preserved to us out of Sanchoniatho's Phœnician history; we should in that case be at a loss perhaps to account for every manner of representation, for every figure and expression in the story; but we should soon agree that all these difficulties were imputable to the manner and customs of his age and country; and should shew more respect to so venerable a piece of antiquity, than to charge it with want of sense, because we did not understand every minute circumstance; we should likewise agree that there were evidently four persons concerned in the story; the man, the woman, the person represented by the serpent, and God. Disagree we could not about their several parts. The serpent is evidently the tempter; the man and the woman are the offenders; God the Judge of all three. The punishments inflicted on the man and woman have no obscurity in them; and as to the serpent's sentence, we should think it reasonable to give it such a sense as the whole series of the story requires.

"It is no unreasonable thing, surely, to demand the same equity of you in interpreting the sense of Moses, as you would certainly use towards any other ancient writer. And if the same equity be allowed, this plain fact undeniably arises from the history,—that man was tempted to disobedience, and did disobey, and forfeited all title to happiness, and to life itself; that God judged him and the deceiver likewise under the form of a serpent. We require no more; and will proceed upon this fact to consider the prophecy before us.

"The prophecy is part of the sentence passed upon the deceiver; the words are these, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,' Gen. iii. 15. Christian writers apply this to our blessed Saviour, emphatically styled here the seed of the woman, and who came in the fulness of time to bruise the serpent's head, by destroying the works of the devil, and restoring those to the liberty of the sons of God, who were held under the bondage and captivity of sin. You will say, What unreasonable liberty of interpretation is this? Tell us by what rules of language the seed of the woman is made to denote one particular person, and by what art you discover the mystery of Christ's miraculous conception and birth in this common expression? Tell us likewise, how bruising the serpent's head comes to signify the destroying the power of sin, and the redemption of mankind by Christ? It is no wonder to hear such questions, from those who look no farther than to the third chapter of Genesis, to see the ground of the Christian application. As the prophecy stands there, nothing appears to point out this particular meaning; much less to confine this prophecy to it. But of this hereafter. Let us for the present lay aside all our own notions, and go back to the state and condition of things, as they were at the time of the delivery of this prophecy; and see (if haply we may discover it) what God intended to discover at that time by this prophecy, and what we may reasonably suppose our first parents understood it to mean.

"They were now in a state of sin, standing before God to receive sentence for their disobedience, and had reason to expect a full execution of the penalty threatened, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' But God came in mercy as well as judgment, purposing not only to punish, but to restore man. The judgment is awful and severe: the woman is doomed to sorrow in conception; the man to sorrow and travail all the days of his life; the ground is cursed for his sake; and the end of the judgment is, 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' Had they been left thus, they might have continued in their labour and sorrow for their appointed time, and at last returned to dust, without any well-grounded hope or confidence in God; they must have looked upon themselves as rejected by their Maker, delivered up to trouble and sorrow in this world, and as having no hope in any other. Upon this foot, I conceive there could have been no religion left in the world; for a sense of religion, without hope, is a state of frenzy and distraction, void of all inducements to love and obedience, or any thing else that is praiseworthy. If, therefore, God intended to preserve them as objects of mercy, it was absolutely necessary to communicate so much hope to them, as might be a rational foundation for their future endeavours to reconcile themselves to him by a better obedience. This seems to be the primary intention of this first divine prophecy; and it was necessary to the state of the world, and the condition of religion, which could not possibly have been supported without the communication of such hopes. The prophecy is excellently adapted to this purpose, and manifestly conveyed such hopes to our first parents. For, let us consider in what sense we may suppose them to understand this prophecy. Now, they must necessarily understand the prophecy, either according to the literal meaning of the words, or according to such meaning as the whole circumstances of the transaction, of which they are a part, do require. If we suppose them to understand the words literally, and that God meant them so to be understood, this passage must appear ridiculous. Do but imagine that you see God coming to judge the offenders; Adam and Eve before him in the utmost distress; that you hear God inflicting pains, and sorrow, and misery, and death upon the first of human race; and that, in the midst of all this scene of wo and great calamity, you hear God foretelling, with great solemnity, a very trivial accident, that should sometimes happen in the world,—that serpents would be apt to bite men by the heels, and that men would be apt to revenge themselves by striking them on the head. What has this trifle to do with the loss of mankind, with the corruption of the natural and moral world, and the ruin of all the glory and happiness of the creation? Great comfort it was to Adam, doubtless, after telling him that his days should be short and full of misery, and his end without hope, to let him know that he should now and then knock a snake on the head, but not even that, without paying dear for his poor victory, for the snake should often bite him by the heel. Adam, surely, could not understand the prophecy in this sense, though some of his sons have so understood it,—a plain indication how much more some men are concerned to maintain a literal interpretation of Scripture, than they are to

make it speak common sense. Leaving this, therefore, as absolutely absurd and ridiculous, let us consider what meaning the circumstances of the transaction do necessarily fix to the words of this prophecy. Adam, tempted by his wife, and she by the serpent, had fallen from their obedience, and were now in the presence of God expecting judgment. They knew full well at this juncture, that their fall was the victory of the serpent, whom by experience they found to be an enemy to God and to man; to man, whom he had ruined by seducing him to sin; to God, the noblest work of whose creation he had defaced. It could not therefore but be some comfort to them to hear the serpent first condemned, and to see that, however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no victory over their Maker, who was able to assert his own honour, and to punish this great author of iniquity. By this method of God's proceeding they were secured from thinking that there was any evil being equal to the Creator in power and dominion,—an opinion which gained ground in after times through the prevalency of evil, and is, where it does prevail, destructive of all true religion. The condemnation therefore of the serpent was the maintenance of God's supremacy; and that it was so understood, we have, if I mistake not, a very ancient testimony in the book of Job: 'With God is strength and wisdom, the deceived and the deceiver are his;' that is, equally subject to his command, Job, xii. 16. The belief of God's supreme dominion, which is the foundation of all religion, being thus preserved, it was still necessary to give them such hopes as might make them capable of religion toward God. These hopes they could not but conceive, when they heard from the mouth of God that the serpent's victory was not a complete victory over even themselves; that they and their posterity should be enabled to contest his empire; and though they were to suffer much in the struggle, yet finally they should prevail and bruise the serpent's head, and deliver themselves from his power and dominion over them. What now could they conceive this conquest over the serpent to mean? Is it not natural to expect that we shall recover that by victory, which we lost by being defeated? They knew that the enemy had subdued them by sin: could they then conceive hopes of victory otherwise than by righteousness? They lost through sin the happiness of their creation: could they expect less from the return of righteousness than the recovery of the blessings forfeited? What else but this could they expect? For the certain knowledge they had of their loss when the serpent prevailed, could not but lead them to a clear knowledge of what they should regain by prevailing against the serpent. The language of this prophecy is indeed in part metaphorical, but it is a great mistake to think that all metaphors are of uncertain signification; for the design and scope of the speaker, with the circumstances attending, create a fixed and determinate sense. Were it otherwise, there would be no certainty in any language; all languages, the Eastern more especially, abounding in metaphors.

"Let us now look back to our subject, and see what application we are to make of this instance.

"This prophecy was to our first parents but very obscure; it was, in the phrase of Saint Peter, but 'a light shining in a dark place;' all that they could certainly conclude from it was, that their case was not desperate; that some deliverance from the evil they were under, would in time appear; but when, or where, or by what means, they could not understand: Their own sentence, which returned them back again to the dust of the earth, made it difficult to apprehend what this victory over the serpent should signify, or how they, who were shortly to be dust and ashes, should be the better for it. But after all that can be urged upon this head to set out the obscurity of this promise, I should ask one question: Was not this promise or prophecy, though surrounded with all this obscurity, a foundation for religion, and trust and confidence towards God after the fall, in hopes of deliverance from the evils introduced by disobedience? If it was, it fully answered the necessity of their case, to whom it was given, and manifested to them all that God intended to make manifest. They could have had towards God no religion, without some foundation of mercy: it was necessary therefore to convey such hopes; but to tell them how these hopes should be accomplished, at what time and manner precisely, was not necessary to their religion. And what is now to be objected against this prophecy? It is very obscure, you say; so it is; but it is obscure in the points which God did not intend to explain at that time, and which were not necessary then to be known. You see a plain reason for giving this prophecy, and, as far as the reason for giving the prophecy extends, so far the prophecy is very plain: it is obscure only where there is no reason why it should be plain; which surely is a fault easily to be forgiven, and very far from being a proper subject for complaint.

"But if this prophecy conveyed to our first parents only a general hope and expectation of pardon and restoration, and was intended by God to convey no more to them, how came we, their posterity, to find so much more in this promise than we suppose them to find? How is it that we pretend to discover Christ in this prophecy, to see in it the mystery of his birth, his sufferings, and his final triumph over all the powers of darkness? By what

new light do we discern all these secrets? By what art do we unfold them?

"It is no wonder to me, that such as come to the examination of the prophecies applied to Christ, expecting to find in each of them some express character and mark of Christ, plainly to be understood as such antecedently to his coming, should ask these, or many other the like questions; or that the argument from ancient prophecy should appear so light and trivial to those who know no better use of it.

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning; and whatever degree of light he thought fit to communicate to our first parents, or to their children in after times, there is no doubt but that he had a perfect knowledge at all times of all the methods by which he intended to rescue and restore mankind; and therefore all the notices given by him to mankind of his intended salvation, must correspond to the great event whenever the fulness of time shall make it manifest. No reason can be given why God should at all times, or at any time, clearly open the secrets of his providence to men; it depends merely upon his good pleasure to do it in what time and in what manner he thinks proper. But there is a necessary reason to be given why all such notices as God thinks fit to give, should answer exactly in due time to the completion of the great design: it is absurd therefore to complain of the ancient prophecies for being obscure; for it is challenging God for not telling us more of his secrets. But if we pretend that God has at length manifested to us, by the revelation of the gospel, the method of his salvation, it is necessary for us to shew that all the notices of this salvation given to the old world do correspond to the things which we have seen and heard with our eyes. The argument from prophecy therefore is not to be formed in this manner, All the ancient prophecies have expressly pointed out and characterized Christ Jesus: But it must be formed in this manner, All the notices which God gave to the fathers of his intended salvation are perfectly answered by the coming of Christ. He never promised or engaged his word in any particular relating to the common salvation, but what he has fully made good by sending his Son to our redemption. Let us try these methods upon the prophecy before us. If you demand that we should shew you *à priori* Christ Jesus set forth in this prophecy, and that God had limited himself by this promise to convey the blessing intended by sending his own Son in the flesh, and by no other means whatever, you demand what I cannot shew, nor do I know who can. But if you inquire whether this prophecy, in the obvious and most natural meaning of it, in that sense in which our first parents and their children after, might easily understand it, has been verified by the coming of Christ, I conceive it may be made as clear as the sun at noon-day, that all the expectation raised by this prophecy, has been completely answered by the redemption wrought by Christ Jesus. And what have you to desire more than to see a prophecy fulfilled exactly? If you insist that the prophecy should have been more express, you must demand of God why he gave you no more light; but you ought at least to suspend this demand till you have a reason to shew for it.

"I know that this prophecy is urged farther, and that Christian writers argue from the expressions of it to shew that Christ is therein particularly foretold. He properly is the seed of a woman in a sense in which no other ever was; his sufferings were well prefigured by the bruising of the heel; his complete victory over sin and death by bruising the serpent's head. When unbelievers hear such reasonings, they think themselves entitled to laugh; but their scorn be to themselves. We readily allow that the expressions do not imply necessarily this sense; we allow farther, that there is no appearance that our first parents understood them in this sense, or that God intended they should so understand them: but since this prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in Christ, and by the event appropriated to him only, I would fain know how it comes to be conceived to be so ridiculous a thing in us, to suppose that God, to whom the whole event was known from the beginning,* should make choice of such expressions as naturally conveyed so much knowledge as he intended to convey to our first parents, and yet should appear in the fulness of time to have been peculiarly adapted to the event, which he from the beginning saw, and which he intended the world should one day see; and which, when they should see, they might the more easily acknowledge to be the work of his hand, by the secret evidence which he had enclosed from the days of old in the words of prophecy. However the wit of man may despise this method, yet is there nothing in it unbecoming the wisdom of God. And when we see this to be the case, not only in this instance, but in many other prophecies of the Old Testament, it is not without reason we conclude, that under the obscurity of ancient prophecy there was an evidence of God's truth kept in reserve, to be made manifest in due time."

The exquisite and masterly sense, clearness, and force of reason, which is so conspicuous in this passage, that every common reader

* "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. "The works of the Lord are done in judgment from the beginning; and from the time he made them, he disposed the parts thereof," Eccl'us. xvi.26.

must perceive, and every judicious one admire it, and the pertinency of it to the present subject, will, I doubt not, sufficiently atone for the length of the quotation.

In all the books of Moses I find no other prophecy but this, relating to the death and sufferings of Christ; I shall, therefore, according to the method pointed out in the words of our Saviour, proceed in the next place to the prophets; and first produce one out of Isaiah, whose application to the Messiah the most obstinate enemies of the gospel have not been able to deny.

Isa. liii. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment:* and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

It is impossible for any one, who is the least acquainted with the history of Christ, not to perceive many circumstances of his life, his sufferings, and his death, plainly pointed at in this prophecy; and, indeed, so apparently and so completely was it fulfilled in Christ, that the later rabbins, to avoid the conclusions which the Christians might draw from this and other prophecies in favour of the gospel, have invented a distinction of a double Messias; "one who was to redeem us, and another who was to suffer for us; for they say, that there are two several persons promised under the name of the Messias,—one of the tribe of Ephraim, the other of the tribe of Judah; one the son of Joseph, the other the son of David; the one to precede, fight, and suffer death—the other to follow, conquer, reign, and never to die."* But Bishop Pearson, from whom I have borrowed this remark, has clearly shewed this distinction to be not only false in itself, but advantageous to the Christian faith, as admitting a suffering Messias to be foretold by the prophets; and has also proved,† that the ancient rabbins did understand this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to be a description of the Messias, without any intimation of a double Messias,—an invention introduced by the modern Jews to favour their vain expectations of a temporal prince and deliverer.

For what is farther to be collected out of the other prophecies, and especially the Psalms, relating to this subject, I cannot do better than to give it to the reader in the words of the same Bishop Pearson, whose observations upon the several articles concerning the sufferings, &c. of Jesus, I would wish him to consider.‡

"All which (the predictions of his sufferings, and particularly this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, compared with his life) if we look upon in the gross, we must acknowledge it fulfilled in him (Jesus) to the highest degree imaginable, 'that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' But if we compare the particular predictions with the historical passages of his sufferings, if we join the prophets and evangelists together, it will most manifestly appear the Messias was to suffer nothing which Christ hath not suffered. If Zechariah say, (xi. 12,) 'They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver;' Saint Matthew will shew (xxvi. 15,) that Judas sold Jesus at the same rate; for the chief priests 'covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.' If Isaiah say, (liii. 5,) 'that he was wounded;' if Zechariah, (xii. 10,) 'they shall look upon me whom they have pierced;' if the prophet David yet more particularly, 'they pierced my hands and my feet,' (Psal. xxii. 16,) the evangelist will shew how he was fastened to the cross, and Jesus himself 'the print of the nails,' (John, xx. 27.) If the Psalmist tell us, they should 'laugh him

* The margin of the Bible has it, "He was taken away by distress and judgment."

* Pearson on the Creed, p. 185. † Ibid. p. 57. ‡ Ibid. p. 88.

to scorn, and shake their head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him ; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him,' (Psalm xxii. 7, 8 ;) Saint Matthew will describe the same action, and the same expression ; for, 'they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God,' (Matt. xxvii. 39, 43.) Let David say, (Psal. xxii. 1,) 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?' and the Son of David will shew in whose person the Father spoke it, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani ?' (Matt. xxvii. 46.) Let Isaiah foretell, (liii. 12,) 'He was numbered with the transgressors,' and you shall find him 'crucified between two thieves, one on his right hand, the other on his left, (Mark, xv. 27.) Read in the Psalmist, (lxix. 21,) 'In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink ;' and you shall find in the evangelist, 'Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst : and they took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink,' (John, xix. 28 ; Matt. xxvii. 48.) Read farther yet, 'They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture,' (Psalm xxii. 18 ;) and to fulfill the prediction, the soldiers shall make good the distinction, 'who took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' (John, xix. 23, 24.) Lastly, let the prophet teach us, 'that he shall be brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and be cut off out of the land of the living,' (Isaiah, liii. 7, 8 ;) all the evangelists will declare how like a lamb he suffered, and the very Jews will acknowledge that he was cut off."

These instances, I imagine, are sufficient to shew, that according to the prophets, "thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to die." That his burial also, and his resurrection, were in like manner foretold, will appear by the following passages.

Isaiah, in the above-quoted chapter, (liii. 9,) speaks of his burial in these words, "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death," the circumstantial accomplishment of which is too remarkable not to be taken notice of.

* The power of life and death had been taken from the Jews and lodged in the hands of the Roman governor, from the time that Augustus annexed Judea to the province of Syria ; which was done some years after the birth of Christ. The chief priests, therefore, and rulers of the Jews, were obliged to apply to Pontius Pilate, not only to put Jesus to death, but for leave to take down his body

* See Pearson on the Creed, Article 4.

and those of the two malefactors executed with him, "that they might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day." For among the Romans, (with whom crucifixion was the usual capital punishment for slaves, robbers, &c. under the degree of Roman citizens,) it was customary to let the carcass hang on the cross till it was either consumed by time, or devoured by birds and beasts. Upon a petition, however, of the executed person's friends or relations, leave to bury them was seldom or never refused ; and hence Pilate without any difficulty yielded to the application of the Jews for taking down the bodies, and gave permission to Joseph of Arimathea to bury that of Jesus. What became of the bodies of the two thieves after they were taken down from the cross is not mentioned by any of the evangelists. That they were buried is almost certain ; because not only the custom of the Jews, but the express words of Moses required, "If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day, that thy land be not defiled," (Deut. xxi. 22, 23.) Which precept was doubtless the reason of their petitioning Pilate to have the bodies taken from the cross that day, enforced by the additional consideration of the particular solemnity and sanctity of the paschal Sabbath then immediately ensuing. And that they were buried in or near the place of crucifixion is, I think, most probable for the following reasons : — First, The place where they were executed was called Golgotha, that is, "a place of a skull," (Matt. xxvii. 33,) a name in all likelihood derived to it from the number of skulls, which, (if it was the usual place of execution, as from this instance it is most reasonable to conclude it was,) might frequently have been found there, either fallen from bodies left to putrefy on the cross, or turned up by the opening the ground for such malefactors as the governor permitted to be buried. Secondly, The Paschal Sabbath * was drawing on apace. For as among the Jews the day was always reckoned to commence from the evening, so, for the greater caution, were they accustomed to begin the sabbatical rest from all kind of work an hour before sunset ; but on this day, which was the preparation of the passover, the holy hours (if I may so speak) began still earlier ; because the paschal lambs † were always slain between the ninth and eleventh hours, within which space of time the whole multitude of Jews repaired to the temple, ‡ where alone the passover was killed, and having there offered the blood and entrails of the paschal victims, they brought back the remaining carcass to dress and eat it at their

* Grotius, ad ver. Matt. xxvii. 58. † Ibid. Matt. xxvi. 2.
‡ Lamy Dissert. de Pasch.

own homes, according to the Mosaical institution. The Jews could not then but be much pressed in time, for the ninth hour was begun before our Saviour expired, and the soldiers coming after that time to the two malefactors found them not yet dead; and therefore by a cruel kind of mercy, to put an end to a painful life, and to despatch them the more speedily, broke their legs, the *coup de grace* obtained for those miserable wretches of the Roman governor by the Jews, and intended likewise for him, who, though innocent, and delivered up by their malice to that infamous and horrid death, yet, with a benevolence and generosity unparalleled, interceded for them even upon the cross, in these compassionate terms, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" (Luke, xxiii. 34.) Now as Jesus, and consequently the two thieves, did not expire till after the ninth hour; as the Jews were obliged to repair to the temple before the eleventh hour, at the expiration of which the sabbatical rest from all kinds of work began; and as they were solicitous that the bodies should be taken down and buried before the commencement of that high and solemn day; it is most likely they buried them at or near the place where they were crucified; because they had not time to carry them to any great distance; because Golgotha, from its name, seems to have been a place of burial for those who had been executed there; and because the want of time is the very reason given in the evangelist for laying the body of Jesus in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, which was near adjoining, as Saint John tells us in these words, (xix. 41, 42;) "Now, in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus, therefore, because of the Jews' preparation, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." Here then we may see and admire the exact completion of this famous prophecy of Isaiah, "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." He was buried, like the wicked companions of his death, under the general leave granted to the Jews for taking down their bodies from the cross; and was like them buried in or near the place of execution. But here the distinction foreseen and foretold many hundred years before, took place in favour of Jesus, who, though "numbered with the transgressors, had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth:" for Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and an honourable counsellor, (Mark, xv. 43,) and Nicodemus, (John, xix. 38—40, a man of the pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, a master of Israel, conspired to make his grave with the rich, by wrapping his body in linen clothes, with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight, and laying it in a new sepulchre," hewed or hollowed into a rock, which Joseph of Arimathea had caused to be made for his own use; circumstances which evidently shew, that he was not only buried by the rich, but like the rich also, according to the prophecy.

The words of David (Psalm xvi. 8, &c.) foretelling the resurrection of Christ, together with Saint Peter's comment upon them, I shall insert entire as they stand in the second chapter of the Acts, the 25th and following verses.

"For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us uuto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

The apostle's reasoning was very well understood by the Jews, and so convincing, that (Acts, ii. 41.) "three thousand souls were that day added" to the church, and baptized into the faith of Christ. His argument stands thus: You acknowledge David to be a prophet, who, under his own person, often spake of the Messiah. To the Messiah therefore belong these words, "Thou shalt not leave my soul [life] in hell [hades, the grave;] neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption;"* because they are by no means applicable to David, who it is not pretended ever rose from the dead: on the contrary, he was buried, and his body remained and putrefied in his sepulchre, "which is with us even to this day." But by divine illumination he foresaw that the Messiah, or Christ, who "according to the flesh" was to descend from him, should be raised up from the dead to "sit upon his throne," that is, to reign like him over the people of God; and therefore he foretold the resurrection of Christ in words most exactly fulfilled in Jesus, who rose alive out of the grave in so short a time after his death, that he "saw no corruption," whereof, adds he, "we are witnesses."

Concerning these words no other question can be raised, than whether they relate to the Messiah; for to David most certainly they can never be applied. If they relate to the Messiah,

* See Whitby on this passage.

then was Jesus the Messiah ; for in his resurrection were they accomplished ; and doubtless the three thousand Jews, who were converted by the preaching of Peter, acknowledged both the one and the other of these propositions. And indeed, by the manner in which these words of the Psalmist were urged by Saint Peter, and afterwards by Saint Paul, (Acts, xiii. 35,) it seems to have been by them taken for granted, that as they were not applicable to David, they must be understood of the Messiah, whom therefore, according to Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, it behoved to suffer, to die, to be buried, and to rise again from the dead, as the several passages above-cited clearly shew.

Besides the express word of prophecy, there were several predictions of another kind, of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, held forth in types and figures ; such as those two mentioned by our Saviour, and applied to himself : "As Moses," says he, "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," John, iii. 14 ; Numb. xxi. 9. And again, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," Matt. xii. 40 ; Jonah, i. 17, and ii. 10. The paschal lamb,* alluded to by Saint Paul in these words, "Christ our passover is slain," 1 Cor. v. 7 ; the waved sheaf, alluded to in like manner by the same apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Rom. xi. 16. and many others. I shall not here inquire how far, and in what cases, an argument from types and figures may be admitted, but shall content myself with quoting a passage relating to this point out of the incomparable Discourses of Bishop Sherlock upon Prophecy, as follows :

"Another question, proper to be considered with respect to the state of religion under the Jewish dispensation, is this, How far the religion of the Jews was preparatory to that new dispensation, which was in due time to be revealed, in accomplishment of the promise made to all nations. Now, if Abraham and his posterity were chosen, not merely for their own sakes, or out of any partial views and regards towards them, but to be the instruments in the hand of God for bringing about his great designs in the world ; if the temporal government was given for the sake of the everlasting covenant, and to be subservient to the introduction of it, it is highly probable, that all the parts of the Jewish dispensation were adapted to serve the same end ; and that the law founded on the temporal covenant was intended, as the temporal covenant itself was, to prepare the way to better promises. If this, upon the whole, appears to be a reasonable supposition, then have we a foundation to inquire into the meaning of the law, not merely as it is a literal command to the Jews, but as containing the figure and image of good things to come. It can hardly be supposed that God, intending finally to save the world by Christ and the preaching of the gospel, should give an intermediate law, which had no respect nor relation to the covenant, which he intended to establish for ever. And whoever will be at the pains to consider seriously the whole administration of Providence together, from the beginning to the end, may see perhaps more reason than he imagines, to allow of types and figures in the Jewish law.

"To proceed then : The Jewish dispensation, not conveying to all nations the blessing promised through Abraham's seed, but being only the administration of the hopes and expectation created by the promise of God ; in this respect it stood entirely upon the word of prophecy ; for future hopes and expectations from God can have no other real foundation. Inasmuch then as the Jewish religion did virtually contain the hopes of the gospel, the religion itself was a prophecy," &c.

That the Jewish Rabbins, and the fathers of the Christian Church, as well as our Saviour and his apostles, understood many things in the law of Moses, in the historical books of the Old Testament, in the Prophets and the Psalms, to be types and shadows of things to come, is very certain ; and if the two former carried their conceits upon this head farther than reason or sense could allow them to do, types and figures are not upon that pretence to be wholly rejected ; especially as many precepts and ceremonies in the Mosaic institution may very well be accounted for, by supposing them intended as images and shadows of things to come ; and can but ill be reconciled to the wisdom of the lawgiver without such a solution. And if such types be once admitted, it will be no difficult matter to shew that they were fulfilled in Christ Jesus, as the great antitype to which they all referred.

Sect. XIX.—Whoever takes an attentive view of the predictions relating to the Messiah,† contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, will perceive the great scheme of Providence in the deliverance of mankind from the power of sin and death, opening by degrees, in a succession of prophecies through the several ages of the world ; each of which, in proportion as the accomplishment of the wonderful and gracious purpose of God advanced, grew more explicit and particular ; till they came at last to point at the very times and person of the expected deliverer. Thus the promise of redemption to mankind, which was given to our first parents in very general and obscure words,

* See Lamy's Diss. de Pasch. and Pearson upon the Creed.

† See Bp. Sherlock's Discourses on the Use and Intent of Prophecy

"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15, importing, that some of their descendants should vanquish their great enemy, was renewed to Abraham in clearer terms, and limited to his descendants through Isaac, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," (Gen. xxii. 18; then to Jacob the younger of the two sons of Isaac; xxvii. 29; and afterwards to Judah and his children, xlix. 8; and lastly to the family of David, (1 Sam. xvi. 12,) who was of the tribe of Judah. The particular stock, from which this branch of righteousness and immortality was to proceed, being thus limited and settled, God was pleased, in the next place, to bring into a nearer and more distinct view the long promised seed; declaring by his prophets the precise time of his coming, the place and miraculous manner of his birth, and so many wonderful particulars of his life, his sufferings, and his death, that by such characteristical marks and notices he might, when he should come, be readily and plainly known. These prophecies, some of them at least, were not only at the time of their delivery, but even to that of their accomplishment, very dark and obscure; but that obscurity proceeded not so much from the terms in which they were expressed, as from the things foretold; which were so seemingly inconsistent, that no human wisdom could reconcile them with each other. For as they sometimes represented the Messiah under the character of a "Deliverer, a Prince whose throne should endure for ever, the Desire of all nations, the Holy One," &c. so at other times they spake of him as a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs," as "despised and rejected of men;" as "afflicted, smitten, wounded, bruised, and scourged; numbered with the transgressors, cut off out of the land of the living, and making his grave with the wicked," and yet "with the rich in his death." So much, however, of these prophecies was at all times clear, that from them the Jews, to whom they were delivered, were encouraged to expect a Redeemer to come at a certain limited time; and so exactly were they able to compute the period prefixed by the prophet Daniel, that at the birth of Christ there was a general expectation among the Jews, which from them spread into other nations, of a great King being about that time to be born in Judea. The place also of his birth, and the stock from which he was to spring were as clearly understood; but the Jews, too much attached to the temporal covenant, proud of being the chosen and peculiar people of God, and, from that pride, not comprehending the full extent of the promise made to Abraham, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," expected a temporal deliverer, a king of the Jews only, considered still as a separate and distinct nation. The Jews, they imagined, were alone to be redeemed, and that from their temporal enemies, and under their Messiah were to reign for ever over the other kings and nations of the earth; and from this imagination, than which nothing could be more contrary to the express promises made to Abraham, nor more injurious to the character of that God, "whose mercy is" universally "over all his works," proceeded their blindness and backwardness in seeing and believing all that the prophets had spoken, and their indignation against Jesus, for assuming the title, without asserting, what they esteemed to be, the kingdom of the Messiah, the throne of David. With the same prejudices were the disciples and apostles themselves so strongly prepossessed, that when he told them of his sufferings and death, "Peter rebuked him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee," Matt. xvi. 22. Jesus, however, suffered, and died, and rose again from the dead, as he had foretold; and, notwithstanding his sufferings, still claimed to be the Messiah, nay, and even founded his claim upon those very sufferings, asserting, that according to the prophets, "thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer." To the prophets, therefore, he sends them for their conviction, and for the removing those prejudices, which, as long as they subsisted, must have kept them effectually from ever acknowledging his claim, unless they would renounce those Scriptures upon whose authority alone their expectations of a Messiah were grounded. For if the prophets spake only of a victorious triumphant Redeemer of Israel, a King who should never die, it is certain Jesus could not be that Redeemer; for he was oppressed and afflicted, and instead of delivering the Jews, was himself delivered up to their enemies, and by them put to death. What the prophets have written about the sufferings, &c. of the Messiah, we have just now seen; and cannot, I think, but acknowledge their predictions to be very clear and express, and to have been most circumstantially accomplished in Christ Jesus; and perhaps to us, who are not blinded with the vain imaginations of the Jews, it may seem matter of wonder that the apostles should so long and so obstinately shut their eyes against so strong a light. The truth is, they were unwilling to give up the pleasing and flattering expectations of a temporal kingdom, which they understood to be plainly spoken of by the prophets, and knew to be incompatible with a suffering, dying Messiah. By expounding, therefore, "in Moses and all the prophets, the things concerning himself, and by opening their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures," Jesus at length brought them to perceive that the kingdom of the Messiah was not a temporal,

but a spiritual and eternal kingdom; that the redemption promised to Adam and the patriarchs, was not the redemption of the children of Israel only from their carnal enemies and oppressors, (an event in which the first father of the world, and even the patriarchs themselves, could have little or no interest,) but the redemption of all mankind from the power and penalty of sin; to be effected, on the one hand, by Christ's fulfilling all righteousness, the original covenant upon which happiness and immortality were stipulated to Adam; and on the other, by his offering up his soul a sacrifice for sin, that is, paying the penalty of death, which all sinners, all mankind had incurred; paying it not as a debtor, "for he was without sin," but as a surety, who willingly and freely took upon himself to make good the failings, and discharge the obligations of others. Of this plan the death of Christ was a necessary part, and so was his resurrection from the dead; by which, having vanquished that enemy, who brought death and sin into the world, he was put into possession of that throne which was "to endure for ever, and was, like David, appointed by God to reign, not over the Jewish nation exclusive of the rest of mankind, but over all those of every nation of the world, who should, like the Jews, make themselves the people of God, by entering into a covenant with him to keep his commandments; the sole tenure by which the children of Israel became originally the people of God; over whom, as such, God, their legal, their constitutional King, if I may so speak, set David as a ruler under him, and promised to continue that delegated vicarial sceptre of righteousness in his posterity for ever. Of all these points there are frequent intimations in the books of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms; by a fair and unprejudiced examination of which, the disciples and apostles might be certainly convinced, that, according to the scheme of the redemption of mankind promised to Adam and the patriarchs, as well as by the express word of prophecy, the Messiah was to die and rise again from the dead. And as, on the one part, had the Scriptures been silent upon the latter of these two articles, they had, from the testimony of their own senses, &c. sufficient proofs of Christ's being risen from the dead; so, on the other, from the exact accomplishment of all the predictions relating to his life, his sufferings, his death and burial, they might, without any farther evidence than that of his body being no where to be found, have infallibly collected from the Scriptures only, that he was risen from the dead. And therefore, when all these testimonies concurred to prove the resurrection, how was it possible for them to withhold their assent?

The prophecies of Jesus himself concerning his rising from the dead on the third day, were another proof of the same kind, upon which they might as reasonably and as certainly depend, as upon that grounded on the predictions of Moses and the prophets. Moses had foretold that the Messiah should be a prophet, and they had been convinced that Jesus was one in the largest sense of that word, by many instances, which had fallen under their own observation, those particularly relating to his passion and crucifixion, most of the minute and extraordinary circumstances of which he had acquainted them with before they came to pass,—such as the treachery of Judas, the desertion of his disciples, Peter's disowning him thrice, the insults and abuses he underwent from the chief priests and elders, and the cruel mockery of the Roman soldiers. The exact correspondence of each of these events with their several predictions, afforded the strongest presumption imaginable in favour of the resurrection, as it was in like manner foretold by him, of whose prescience they had just then received so many convincing proofs; especially as some of the predicted events were of such a nature as not to be foreseen, but by that eye which penetrates into the inmost recesses of the heart of man, and spieth out all his thoughts even before they are conceived. For although the chief priests and pharisees had for some time "sought how they might put him to death," yet they had resolved against doing it on the "feast-day, for fear of the people," (Matt. xxvi. 4, 5,) who, but a very few days before, had in a sort of triumphal procession attended his entry into Jerusalem, cutting down branches of palm, strewing them before him, spreading their garments in the way, and crying, "Hosannah, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," (Mark, xi. 8, 9.) Yet on the feast-day was he put to death, at the instance of the chief priests and pharisees; and by the clamours of this very people, against the inclination and endeavours of Pilate, in whom the power of life and death resided, and who, as his judge, declared him innocent again and again, and when he gave him up to be crucified, (Matt. xxvii. 24.) "took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." This sudden change in the counsels of the chief priests, in the hearts of the multitude, and in the manners of Pontius Pilate,* who was a man of a haughty, rough, intractable, and implacable spirit, who, so far from having any complaisance for the Jewish nation, or regard for their customs or religion, had all along treated them with the most cruel and tyrannical insolence, and who more than once had contemptuously acted in direct opposition to their most just and reasonable demands; a change, I say, so sudden, from

* Pearson on the Creed.

one extreme to another, could not with any certainty be previously deduced from the consideration of the instability of human counsels, and the fickleness of the mind of man. The same thing may be said concerning the desertion of his disciples, and Peter's disowning him thrice, each of which events came to pass within a few hours after they were foretold, and within the very time prefixed; contrary to their own express and confident declarations, that though they "should die with him, they would never deny (renounce) him," (Matt. xxvi. 35,) made at the time and upon the occasion of this very prophecy. Add to this the inhuman abuses, insults, and mockery he endured from the chief priests, and from the Roman soldiers; for these surely were no usual part of the punishment inflicted upon criminals, the most flagitious of whom are seldom treated with more severity than their sentence requires, especially when that sentence extends to taking away their lives by a lingering and painful death. And our Saviour's case undoubtedly deserved more than ordinary compassion, especially from the Roman soldiers, as he had been pronounced innocent by the Roman governor himself, and was known to be sacrificed only to the envy and malice of the Jews. Therefore that Jesus, who foretold all these extraordinary particulars, was endued with the all-prescient Spirit of God, the disciples could have no reason to doubt; and consequently could have as little cause to call his resurrection in question, which he had foreseen and foretold by the same divine Spirit, from whom no event, how remote or uncommon soever, can be concealed, and who can never deceive or lie. And therefore the apostles, even without the testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen, without the authority of the Scriptures foretelling his resurrection, and without the infallible proofs of his being alive after his passion, which they themselves received from seeing him, handling him, and conversing with him, might and ought to have believed that he was risen from the dead, upon the single evidence of his having predicted it, joined to that of his body being no where to be found, as Saint John in fact did, and was therefore pronounced blessed by our Saviour himself, in these words spoken to Saint Thomas upon the occasion of his refusing to believe without the attestation of his senses: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." Upon which more hereafter.

I shall here rest the cause, and close the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus; since it is manifest, that the apostles, who were to be witnesses of this great event, and preachers of the gospel to all the world, had no doubt or scruple left concerning his being really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead, after his appearing to Saint Thomas; for they went into Galilee, "to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them," in obedience to his command, and in expectation of meeting him there according to his promise, "where when they saw him, they worshipped him," (Matt. xxviii. 16, 17;) from thence they returned again to Jerusalem, and continued in that city, in obedience to another command, "waiting for the promise of the Father," (Acts, i. 4;) which within a few days after was made good to them by the coming of the Holy Ghost, (ii. 4.) Upon these two points I beg leave to say a few words for the better understanding some passages relating to them in Saint Matthew, Saint Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles.

Sect. XX.—All the males among the Jews were, by the law of Moses, (Exod. xxiii. 17; Deut. xvi. 16,) commanded to repair thrice every year to Jerusalem, "to appear," as it is expressed, "before the Lord;" namely, at the three great feasts,—the Passover, called also the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, named Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Each of these solemnities lasted a whole week. The apostles, therefore, and disciples, who had come up to Jerusalem from Galilee, their native country, not merely to attend upon their master, but in obedience to the above cited law of Moses, to keep the passover, continued, as they were obliged to do, at Jerusalem, till the end of that festival. And there Jesus appeared to them a second time, (eight days after his first appearance,) Saint Thomas being with them, (John, xx. 26.) The next appearance of Christ, to any number of his disciples together, was at the Sea of Tiberias, called also the Sea of Galilee; and this is expressly said by Saint John, (xxi. 14,) to be "the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after he was risen from the dead;" from whence it is evident, that the appearance on a mountain in Galilee, mentioned by Saint Matthew, was subsequent to this spoken of by Saint John, and was also in a different place, on a mountain, whereas the latter was by the Sea of Tiberias. Three reasons may be assigned for our Saviour's meeting his disciples in Galilee. 1*st*, Galilee was the country in which he had resided above thirty years, from his infancy to the time when he first began to preach the kingdom of God: there did he first begin to declare and evidence his mission by miracles, and in the cities of that region did he perform the greatest part of his mighty works; so that he must necessarily have been more known, and have had more followers in that country, than in any other region of Judea. And therefore one reason for his shewing himself in Galilee after he was risen from the dead seems to

have been, that, where he was personally known to so many people, he might have the greater number of competent witnesses to his resurrection. Accordingly, Saint Paul tells us he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, which therefore in all probability happened at the mountain in Galilee, where, Saint Matthew says, Jesus appointed his disciples to meet him, as I have observed once before. 2*dly*, Galilee was also the native country of the greatest part, if not of all his apostles and disciples. There they dwelt, and supported their families, some of them at least, by mean and laborious occupations. So strait and so necessitous a condition of life, must needs have rendered a long absence from their own homes highly inconvenient to them at that time, especially when the barley harvest, which always fell out about the time of the passover, was either begun, or upon the point of beginning. As soon, therefore, as the paschal solemnity was over, which detained them necessarily at Jerusalem for a whole week, it was natural to suppose that they would return into Galilee. Upon which supposition our Saviour, before his death, promised after he was risen, "he would go before them into Galilee;" which remarkable expression was again made use of by the angel after his resurrection, (Mark, xvi. 7,) who bade the women tell his disciples, "that he" Jesus "would go before them into Galilee;" that is, would be in Galilee before them, and would meet them there. Christ, indeed, afterwards commands them by the same women to go into Galilee, adding a promise, that they should see him. But this command must not be understood to imply a suspicion, that without those peremptory orders of their master, they would have continued at Jerusalem, where, after the festival was over, they had nothing to do. It ought rather to be taken as a confirmation of his promise of meeting them in Galilee, and a strong encouragement to them to depend upon the performance of it in the due place and season. The time of their entering upon the apostolical office of preaching the gospel to all the world, was not yet come; neither were they yet fully prepared or qualified for that important work; which, after they had once undertaken it, was to be not only the sole employment of their lives, but the occasion of their leaving their fathers, their children, their country, and their friends, to travel up and down the world, exposed to hardships, dangers, persecution, and death, in unknown and remote corners of the earth. Of all which their master had frequently forewarned them before his death, and particularly in that affectionate discourse he held to them the night in which he was betrayed. To prepare them therefore by degrees for a state of so much affliction and mortification, and to give them an opportunity of seeing and providing, in the best manner they were able, for their relations and families, to whom they were soon to bid adieu for ever, their gracious Lord, who knew how to indulge, because he had himself felt, the affections and infirmities of human nature, and who, by recommending his mother, even from the cross, to the care of his beloved disciple, (John, xix. 26, 27,) had taught them what regards were due to those tender ties of nature, not only permitted them to return into Galilee, but promised to meet them there, and did in fact meet them there, not only once, but several times; as may be inferred from what Saint Luke says of his having shewn himself to them "for forty days after his passion," (Acts, i. 3,) compared with what Saint John says of the appearance by the lake of Tiberias, which he expressly calls the "third time" that Christ shewed himself to his disciples after his resurrection. After this Saint Matthew speaks of another appearance in Galilee, on a mountain, where, adds he, "Jesus appointed his disciples." When this appointment was made, there is no intimation given in any of the evangelists. If it was not at the appearance at the Lake of Tiberias, which there is no reason to imagine it was, Saint John saying nothing of any such matter, it was probably at some other appearance in Galilee, between this last and that mentioned by Saint Matthew. And as there was a great number of brethren present upon that occasion, it is rational to conclude, that timely notice was given, as well of the day, as of the place of meeting. But however this might have been, I am persuaded that the greatest part of the appearances of Christ "for the forty days after his passion," were in Galilee, since the reasons that required the apostles to return thither, were as strong for their continuing there, till the approach of the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, should call them back to Jerusalem.

3*dly*, Another reason for meeting his disciples in Galilee, and for concluding that the appearances mentioned in the Acts were chiefly in that country, and that there were many of them, may be deduced from what Saint Luke tells us of the subjects upon which our Saviour spoke to his disciples on these occasions, namely, "of things pertaining to the kingdom of God," Acts, i. 3. Before they set out upon the great work of preaching the kingdom of God to all the world, it was necessary that they should be fully instructed in the doctrines they were to preach, and in the several functions of the apostolical office; that they should thoroughly understand the intentions of their master, and have some view of the means and assistances by which they should be enabled to perform a task so apparently above their abilities; and some hopes and

encouragements to support them under the prospect of those difficulties and dangers they were given to expect in propagating the gospel. In order to all this, many inveterate prejudices relating to the law of Moses and the Jewish nation were to be rooted out; the scheme of God in the universal redemption of mankind was to be laid open to them; many human affections, reluctances, and terrors were to be subdued, and their hearts to be fortified with courage and constancy, a disregard and contempt of hardships, perils, pain, and death. To these several purposes nothing could more conduce than frequent visits from their Lord, whose resurrection (of which every appearance was a fresh proof) was an unquestionable evidence of his power; whose every appearance was an instance of his affection and condescension to them, and of his fidelity in performing the promise he had made before his passion of coming to them again after his death, and being with them for a little while before he went to his Father; and whose fidelity and exactness in thus performing his promise, was an infallible earnest and security for the coming of that Comforter who was to supply his place, "to guide them into all truth, to bring to their remembrance whatever he had spoken to them, to enable them to do greater works than he had done," and to fill their hearts "with that joy which it should not be in the power of man to take from them." Add to this, the weight and authority derived to his precepts and instructions from their being delivered by himself in person; and the great measure of strength accruing to their faith from their having frequently before their eyes the Captain of their salvation, who, after having fought with the powers of darkness, and triumphed over sin and death, was to "sit down thenceforth at the right hand of God," invested with the power of assisting those who should fight under his banner, and rewarding their toils, their sufferings, and their death with a crown of immortal life. And if nothing could more effectually bring about all these great effects than Christ's frequently meeting his apostles, it will evidently appear that no place could be more proper for those meetings than Galilee, if we consider, that the apostles, having their habitations in that country, might reside there without any suspicion, and assemble without any fear of the persecutors and murderers of their master, the chief priests and the Roman governor, for Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod, (Luke, xxiii. 7.) Whereas had they remained in Jerusalem, and continued to assemble frequently together, while the report of their master's being risen from the dead was fresh and in every body's mouth, the chief priests and elders, whose hatred or apprehensions of Jesus Christ were not extinguished by his blood, as appears by their persecuting and murdering his followers long after,—these rulers of the Jews, I say, would undoubtedly have given such interruptions to those meetings, and thrown such obstacles in the way, as must have necessitated our Lord to interpose his miraculous power to prevent or remove them. Now, as all these inconveniences might be avoided by our Saviour's meeting his disciples in Galilee, it is more agreeable to the wisdom of God, (which, as Mr Locke observes,* is not usually at the expense of miracles, but only in cases that require them,) to suppose these frequent meetings to have been in Galilee rather than in Jerusalem, and more analogous to the proceeding of our Lord himself, who, being in danger from the scribes and pharisees, refrained from appearing publicly in Jerusalem for some time before the hour appointed for his sufferings and death was come, and "walked in Galilee," as Saint John tells us, (vii. 1,) "for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." From these considerations I think it clear, that all the appearances of Christ to his disciples, from that to Saint Thomas, mentioned in Saint John, to that last in Jerusalem, on the day of his ascending, mentioned by Saint Luke both in his gospel and in the Acts, were in Galilee: from whence when the apostles returned afterwards to Jerusalem, they were covered from the apprehension of giving any umbrage by residing there, for the short space to come between their return and the time of their entering upon their apostolical office, by the obligation they were under, in common with the rest of their brethren the Jews, to repair to that city for the celebration of the Feast of Weeks, (Acts, ii. 1, &c.) called also Pentecost: upon the most solemn day of which festival they were, according to the promise of their master, filled with the Holy Ghost, and endued with power from above to defy all danger, and surmount all opposition in preaching the gospel of Christ.

And hence we learn, that all the latter part of the 24th chapter of Saint Luke's gospel, from the 49th verse to the end inclusive, relates to what happened at Jerusalem, &c. after the return of the apostles from Galilee: of whose departure into Galilee after the resurrection of Christ, or of his promise of going thither before them, this evangelist having not thought it to his purpose to make any mention, thought it as needless to say any thing of their leaving Jerusalem; since the scene of the last appearance, as well as of the former related by him, was in that city; and since to those who by any other means should come to be aquainted with the whole history of our Saviour, there would be no danger of confounding those two appearances. As to

* Reasonableness of Christianity.

those who should happen to meet with no other account but his gospel, (if such a thing could be supposed,) no great damage could arise from their mistaking them to be one and the same.

Sect. XXI. — By this long and scrupulous examination of the several particulars which constitute the evidence of the resurrection, I have endeavoured to shew, that never were there any facts that could better abide the test. And if I have in any degree succeeded in my endeavours, I shall neither repent my own labour, nor apologize to the reader for having dwelt so long upon this subject: since the conclusion that will inevitably follow from this proposition is, that never was there a fact more fully proved than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For besides the testimony of some, who may be supposed to have had no prejudices either for or against the resurrection, — I mean the Roman soldiers, who reported that his sepulchre was miraculously opened by an angel, or a divinity, (for so they must have styled that celestial apparition;) and besides the testimony of others, who were apparently prepossessed with notions contrary to the belief of Christ's being risen from the dead, and yet affirmed that they were not only told by the angels that he was risen, but that they themselves had seen him, talked with him, and handled him. Besides this human testimony, I say, which, considering all the circumstances attending it, must be allowed to have been sufficient to prove any event, that was not either impossible or improbable in the highest degree, there were (as it was reasonable to expect there should be) other evidences as extraordinary and miraculous as the resurrection itself. Of this kind are the predictions contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, setting forth the design and purpose of God to redeem mankind by the righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the "seed of the woman." Without the resurrection, this great scheme of divine mercy had been incomplete; by that it was perfected, and the triumph over death added to that over sin; the Messiah thereby accomplishing all that the Scriptures foretold of his glory and power. When, therefore, one part of the promises relating to Jesus had been so exactly made good in his life and death, it is reasonable to conclude, that God did not fail to fulfil the others in his resurrection.

In the same class of evidence may also be ranked the prophecies of Jesus himself, relating to his rising from the dead, which, coming from one whose other predictions (of which there had been many) had been always accomplished, deserved to be credited no less than the others, and were not only verified by the event itself, but confirmed by other subsequent events, foretold likewise by him before his passion, and linked with and depending upon that great proof of his divine power. Such, for instance, were his meeting his disciples in Galilee, his being with them a little while before he went to his Father, his ascension into heaven, and his sending unto them the promised Comforter, with all the glorious faculties and powers they received upon his coming. With so various, so astonishing, so well connected and irrefragable a chain of evidence, is this important article of the resurrection bound up and fortified.

But all these proofs were not exhibited to all the Jews; for "not to all the people was Jesus shewn" alive after his passion, but "to witnesses chosen before of God; to us (saith Saint Peter) who did eat and drink with him after that he arose from the dead," (Acts, x. 41.) That Christ made choice of a select number of disciples, and particularly of twelve, (who were called apostles,) to be witnesses of the great actions of his life, and especially of his resurrection, and preachers of his gospel to all the world, is a thing too well known to need any proof. To qualify them for this double office, he not only, upon many occasions both before and after his crucifixion, discoursed to them in particular "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," and poured upon them all the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, but gave them every kind of evidence of his being risen from the dead, which the most scrupulous and sceptical could imagine or require; "shewing himself alive" to them "by many infallible proofs," such as eating and drinking with them, &c. "for forty days after his passion." And indeed, it is highly expedient that those, upon whose testimony and credit the truth of any fact is to be established, should have the fullest and most unexceptionable evidence of it that can be had; because their having had all possible means of information, must needs add great weight and authority to their depositions. Hence then we may learn the reason of our Saviour's appearing so often to his disciples after his resurrection, of his requiring them to handle him, and see that it was he himself, of his eating and drinking with them, of his referring them to the Scriptures, to his own predictions, and to the testimony of those to whom he had appeared, before he came to them; and lastly, of his satisfying the unreasonable scruples of Saint Thomas, who, being one of the chosen witnesses, (one of the twelve,) it was proper he should have an equal knowledge of the fact he was to attest with his other brethren the apostles. That this perfect knowledge of the things they were to give testimony to, was necessary for those who were ordained to be apostles, is farther evident from the following words of Saint Peter, (Acts, i. 15—26,) who, after the ascension of our Lord, proposing to the

rest of the disciples to fill up the vacancy made by the transgression and death of Judas, by electing one to take part with them in their ministry and apostleship, describes the qualifications requisite in an apostle, by limiting their choice in these words: "Wherefore, of these men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." Hence also it is plain, that all these infallible proofs were not vouchsafed by Christ to his disciples, merely out of a particular favour and regard to them, that they might believe and be saved; but with a farther view, that others also, through their testimony, founded on the completest and exactest information, might likewise believe and be saved. The reproof of Christ to Saint Thomas, for not believing without the attestation of his senses, implied in the blessing pronounced by him on those "who, having not seen, had yet believed," is a clear argument, that our Saviour thought his disciples had sufficient cause to believe he was risen from the dead, even before he shewed himself to them. And that they had so in fact, I have above endeavoured to prove; and that Saint John did believe, before he saw his master, he himself assures us. Had Christ therefore intended nothing more, than to bring his disciples to a belief of his resurrection, he might have left them to the testimony of the Roman soldiers, to that of the women, to the writings of Moses and the Prophets, to his own predictions, to the state of the sepulchre, and that wonderful circumstance of his body's being no where to be found: to all this evidence he might, I say, have left them, without appearing to them himself, and left them without excuse, had they still continued faithless and unbelieving. But though the apostles had upon this evidence believed their master to be risen from the dead; yet, without those other infallible proofs mentioned by Saint Luke, they would certainly have not been so well qualified for witnesses of the resurrection to all the world; that is to say, the reasons upon which they believed would not have appeared so convincing. The heathens would not have admitted the testimony of Moses and the Prophets, of whose writings they knew nothing, and of whose divine authority they had no proof. And as to the depositions of the women, besides that they were strangers to their characters, they might, from Christ's appearing to them, with some colour have demanded why he did not appear likewise to those whom he commissioned to preach his gospel, and to be witnesses of his resurrection. But when, on the contrary, the apostles could tell them that they themselves had seen Christ, had handled him, eat and drank with him, and conversed with him for forty days after that he was risen from the dead, they could not but allow them to have had the fullest evidence of the resurrection, supposing what they told them to be true; and of this, the purity of their doctrine, the holiness of their lives, their courage and constancy in defying and undergoing all kinds of hardships, dangers, pain and death, in advancing a cause, which every worldly interest obliged them to desert, joined to the attestation of the Holy Spirit, "working with them, and confirming the word with signs following," were such assurances as no other man could give of his veracity.

From what has been said, it may appear, how little ground there is for the cavils that have been raised upon our Lord's forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch him; and upon his not shewing himself after he was risen to the Jews, to the chief priests and elders, to the scribes and pharisees: the one of which has been interpreted as a refusal to Mary Magdalene of the necessary evidence of his being risen from the dead; and the other, as a breach of the promise, implied in these words, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man," &c. (Matt. xii. 39, 40.) In which, it is said, Christ promised to appear, after he was risen, to that "evil and adulterous generation," that is, to the Jews, &c. as contradistinguished from his disciples and apostles. That Christ promised by these words to give that "evil generation" sufficient proof of his rising from the grave after having lain in it three days, I readily allow; but that he promised to appear to them, I absolutely deny, and think it impossible to prove he did, from the above-cited passage. Of his rising again from the grave on the third day, the Jews had the testimony of the prophets, of the predictions of Christ himself, the evidence of the Roman soldiers, of his body's being no where to be found, of the women and disciples, and apostles, to whom he had appeared, and who, before the Sanhedrim, bore witness to his resurrection, and, having just before wrought a miracle upon a lame man, declared that they had done it in the name of "Jesus of Nazareth, whom," say they, "ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," (Acts, iv. 10.) This surely was evidence sufficient to convince any reasonable and unprejudiced person; and, consequently, to acquit our Lord of the promise of giving that "evil generation" satisfactory proofs of his being risen from the dead. To the evidence vouchsafed by Christ, either out of

favour to those "who had forsaken all and followed him," or to those whom he had chosen to be "witnesses of him to all the world," they certainly could have no just pretensions; who, instead of being his disciples, had rejected his doctrine, and put him to death as an impostor and blasphemer; and instead of shewing any disposition to embrace or propagate his gospel, opposed it with all their power, and by threats and punishments forbade his apostles to preach any more in his name. That Mary Magdalene was convinced that it was Jesus who appeared to her, I have already shewn very fully; and that was all that was necessary for her single self: supposing, therefore, that she never had afterwards the permission of touching or embracing her master, (which, by the way, cannot be proved,) neither had she, nor any one else, reason to complain or cavil, since neither her own faith, nor that of any other person, depended upon her having that proof of the resurrection of Christ; for she was not an apostle, nor one of the "chosen witnesses." And it is very remarkable that none of the apostles, either in preaching to the unconverted Jews or Gentiles, or in their epistles to the Church, ever make any mention of the appearances of Christ to the women; and the evangelists seem to have related them only upon account of their being connected with other more important parts of the history of the resurrection. The truth is, the testimony of the women, though of great weight with the apostles, and with those who received it from their own mouths, was but second-hand hear-say evidence to those who had it only from the apostles' report; who, for that reason, insisted always upon their having themselves seen their master, "after that he was risen from the dead;" a circumstance, as far as I can recollect, not omitted by any of them, in their arguments upon the resurrection of Jesus; as may be seen in the passages of Scripture that give any particular account of those discourses. And thus Saint Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, (xv. 8,) after enumerating many appearances of Christ to the twelve apostles, and others, closes all with saying, "and last of all he was seen of me also." So much care did they take to give reasonable evidence for the reasonable faith they required.

Sect. XXII. — All that has hitherto been said, relates chiefly to the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as they were laid before the apostles, those "chosen witnesses" of that great and astonishing event. And I hope, upon a serious and attentive view of the fair and unimposing manner in which those proofs were offered to their consideration, and of the number and certainty of the facts upon which they were grounded, every judicious and candid inquirer after truth will allow, that, to the apostles at least, the resurrection of Jesus was most fully and most unexceptionably proved. I shall now proceed to lay before the reader some arguments (for I cannot enter into all) that may induce us, who live at so remote a distance of time from that age of evidence and miracles, to believe that Christ rose from the dead.

The first, and the principal argument, is the testimony of those chosen witnesses, transmitted down in writing, either penned by themselves, or authorized by their inspection and approbation.

The second, is the existence of the Christian religion.

Before we admit the testimony of these "chosen witnesses" contained in the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation, it may be proper to consider, in the first place, what reasons there are for our believing this testimony to be genuine; or, in other words, believing them to be the authors of those books, which are now received under their names. And in the next place, what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to this testimony, supposing it genuine.

To prove the apostles and evangelists * to be the authors of those Scriptures, which are now received under their names, we have the concurrent attestation of all the earliest writers of the Church, deduced by an uninterrupted and uncontrolled tradition, from the very times of the apostles; which is such an authentication of these sacred records, as is not to be overturned by bare presumptions, and a surmised and unproved charge of forgery. But for the proofs of this proposition, I shall refer the reader to the discourses of those learned men, † who have treated more particularly upon this subject, and shall content myself with offering in support of those proofs the following considerations; in which I shall endeavour to shew, 1*st*, The probability of the apostles having left in writing the evidences and doctrines of the religion they preached, and of their disciples having preserved and transmitted those writings to posterity. 2*dly*, The improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection.

* I use these two words, Apostles and Evangelists, in this place, to denote and distinguish the authors of the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, &c. though they might all have been comprehended under the general term apostles, by which title not only the twelve, so called by Christ himself, but Matthias afterwards, and Paul, and all the seventy or seventy-two disciples, are mentioned by some of the fathers. Of this last number were the evangelists Mark and Luke, (as Dr Whitby has shewn from Origen and Epiphanius,) and as such were qualified by their own personal knowledge of most of the facts, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to write their gospels, without the inspection of the two great apostles Peter and Paul, which yet (as we are told by some of the fathers) was a farther authority given to them, and such as would have sufficed though they had not been themselves particularly inspired.

† See Dr Whitby's Prefatory Discourses to his Annotations upon the Gospels, Acts, &c. See also L'Abbadie de la Religion Chrétienne, tom. II.

First, If the precepts and examples of Jesus Christ and his apostles were to be the rules by which all those who, in succeeding ages, should believe in him, were required to govern themselves, it seems most consonant to the wisdom of God, because agreeable to what he himself practised when he gave the law to the Israelites, to commit those rules of salvation to writing, rather than to the unsure and treacherous conveyance of oral tradition; which cannot with any safety be depended upon for scarce so much as one or two generations. It is therefore highly reasonable to suppose, that the same Spirit which incited and enabled the apostles to preach the gospel, and bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ in every nation of the known world, should likewise incite and enable them to deliver down to posterity, in a method the least liable to uncertainty and error, that testimony, and those precepts, upon which the faith and practice of after-times were to be established, especially when it is, in the *second* place, considered, that all revelation, (revelation, I mean, of the doctrines and system of the gospel) was confined to the apostles, and consequently ended with them. The power of working miracles, speaking with other tongues, casting out unclean spirits, &c. was frequently, if not universally, given to the first converts to Christianity; and some of these gifts were continued for many generations in the Church. But to the apostles only was our Saviour pleased to reveal his will. Accordingly, in the epistles of Saint Paul * we see that those Christians who are endowed with many and various gifts of the Holy Spirit, stood, however, in need of the instructions and directions of that apostle, in many points both of faith and practice; and the earliest writers after the apostles, though possessed themselves of many of those miraculous powers, instead of pretending to immediate revelation, have upon all occasions recourse to the Holy Scriptures, which they acknowledge to have been written by the assistance of the Divine Spirit, as to that fountain from whence alone they can derive the waters of life: both which appeals, as well that made to the apostles by their contemporaries, as those made by succeeding Christians to the Scriptures, would have been unnecessary, had they, like the apostles, been taught all things by revelation, and been guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit.

This being the case with those Christians who were converted to the faith by the preaching of the apostles themselves, and who were to transmit to succeeding ages that gospel upon which, according to their belief, the salvation of mankind depended; is it not natural to imagine they would take the most effectual means to supply those defects, which they were sensible of in themselves; and to guard against those errors which, through the imbecility of the human mind, they had fallen into, even while the voices of the apostles still sounded in their ears; and to which their posterity must of necessity be still more liable? And what more effectual means could they pursue, than either to obtain in writing from the apostles themselves, the evidences and doctrines of the Christian faith; or, which amounted to much the same thing, to write them down from their mouths, or under their inspection and approbation; or, lastly, to transcribe from their own memories what they could recollect of the doctrines and instructions of the apostles? Of these three methods, the two first were unquestionably the best; the last was subject to many imperfections and mistakes: for though our Saviour promised to enable his apostles by the Holy Spirit, "to call to mind whatever he had said unto them," I do not find that the memories of those who heard the apostles were ever assisted in the like miraculous manner. If the apostles therefore had not, either from their care for the "household of faith," or from the suggestions of the Holy Spirit, transmitted the proofs and doctrines of the gospel to posterity in one of the two first-mentioned ways, it is to be presumed they would have been called upon to do it by those, who looked upon them as teachers commissioned and inspired by the Spirit of Truth, and "who alone had the words of eternal life." And if neither of those two desirable things could have been obtained, recourse would undoubtedly have been had to the last. And indeed it is evident, from Saint Luke's preface to his gospel, that many writings of this kind were current among the Christians of those times; none of which, that I know of, having come down to us, it is to be presumed they were superseded by writings of greater authority; that is to say, writings either penned by the apostles themselves, or authorized by their inspection and approbation; because this seems to be the best account that can be given for the different fate that hath attended these several writings; the former having disappeared and died soon after their birth; and the latter having survived now almost seventeen centuries, in the same degree of esteem and veneration with which they were at first received by the converts of the apostolic age. I say by the converts of the apostolic age; for that the difference between these writings was made in that age is very probable; 1*st*, Because those very contemporaries of the apostles stood themselves in need of their instructions, admonitions, and exhortations for their own direction and encouragement; and 2*dly*, For the conviction of the next age, who were to receive the gospel

* See particularly the Epistles to the Corinthians.

from their hands, they wanted the testimony and authority of those persons to whom the facts upon which their faith depended were the most completely proved, and who alone, in matters of doctrine, were "guided into all truth" by the infallible "Spirit of God;" for by their own evidence they could prove no more than what fell within the compass of their own knowledge, which could extend no farther than to what they had themselves seen of the apostles, or heard from their mouths; and this evidence of theirs could acquire no farther authority by having been committed to writing. The apostles alone could prove, what they only knew; and were the only authentic preachers of those doctrines, which they alone received from Christ, or, after his ascension, from the Holy Spirit. Their successors, besides bearing testimony to their characters, and giving evidence perhaps of some collateral facts which had fallen under their own observations, could do no more than witness their depositions; that is, that these and these were the facts, and these and these were the doctrines delivered by the apostles. If the apostles, therefore, either from the secret instigation of the Holy Ghost, or from their paternal care and affection for "the household of faith, or at the request of their "children in Christ Jesus," did commit to writing the proofs and doctrines of the Christian religion, (as it is reasonable to suppose they did,) it is as reasonable to conclude, that what they either writ or approved, must necessarily have been preferred to all other writings whatever.

And as the writings of the apostles must, for the reasons above mentioned, have been of great weight and importance to the Christians of their times, and of still greater to those of succeeding ages, who could not, like their predecessors, upon any occasion have recourse to the living and infallible oracles of God, it is natural to imagine that the persons in whose hands those sacred and invaluable treasures were deposited would preserve and guard them with the utmost fidelity and care, would impart copies of them to such of their brethren who could not have access to the originals, and would, from the same principle of Christian benevolence and fidelity, see that those copies were transcribed with all that exactness which human nature, ever liable to slips and errors, was capable of. The same care, under the same allowances, it is to be supposed, would be also taken by those who should translate them into the several languages spoken by Christians of different nations, who did not understand that in which the apostles wrote.

These several steps appear to me so natural and obvious, that I cannot but think any set of reasonable and honest men could not fail of making them, under the same circumstances, as attended the first preachers and converts of Christianity. And from hence arises a strong presumption in favour of those accounts which inform us that the apostles and evangelists were the genuine authors of those writings which are now received under their names,—That although many, even in the apostles' times, "had taken in hand," as Saint Luke expresses it, "to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were most surely believed amongst Christians, even as they delivered them, who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word;" and although some years after the death of the apostles, many gospels, epistles, &c. appeared, which were ascribed to them, to the Virgin Mary, and even to Jesus Christ himself; yet those only, which we now account canonical, were admitted as such, from the very earliest ages of Christianity. That these canonical books were preserved and kept, with the most scrupulous and religious care, by the several churches or societies of Christians; who did not, and indeed upon their principles could not, presume to add to them, or take from them the least tittle. That copies of them were immediately dispersed throughout the whole Christian world; "the apostles" (saith Irenæus, lib. 3. l. 1,) "first preparing the gospel, and afterwards, by the will of God, delivering it to us in the Scriptures, to be thenceforward the pillar and foundation of our faith." "And the first successors of the apostles," (as Eusebius informs us, Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 37,) "leaving their countries, preached to them who had not heard of the Christian faith, and then delivered to them, as the foundation of their faith, the writings of the Holy Evangelists." That the originals of the epistles were still preserved in the respective churches to which they were directed in the time of Tertullian, who, writing to the heretics of his age, namely, of the third century, bids them "go to the apostolical churches, where the authentic epistles of the apostles," saith he, "are still recited." That, lastly, translations of these Scriptures were made so early as to precede the general admission of some parts of them, which were afterwards received as genuine: the Syriac version, for instance, being so ancient, that it leaves out the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistles of John, and the Revelation, as being for a time controverted in some of the Eastern churches; which, by the way, shews how scrupulous the first Christians were about admitting into the canon of Scripture, writings which, though bearing the names of the apostles, and received by some churches as genuine, were yet questioned and suspected by others. To all which we may add still farther, that these several accounts relating merely to facts, tend only to establish another fact, namely, that the apostles and evangelists did

compose the gospels, epistles, &c. ascribed to them, which fact is capable of being proved by the same kind of evidence as any other fact of the same nature. That the evidences of this fact cannot be overturned, but upon such principles as will equally subvert the proofs of all facts that existed at any great distance of time from the present. That we ought therefore either to admit this fact, or reject all those, without distinction, which stand only upon the credit of histories and records, of the truth of any of which we can have no stronger assurances, than we have of the authenticity of these holy writings.*

Sect. XXIII.—The next point to be considered is, the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection.

The reasons given under the foregoing article, to shew the probability of the apostles having left in writing the evidences and doctrines of Christianity, and of their disciples having preserved and transmitted those writings to their successors, will lead us to discover the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection. For if it was necessary for the Christians, even of the apostolic age, to have in writing the directions and instructions of the apostles in many points both of faith and practice, as is evident it was from almost all the epistles, it was as necessary for them to be assured, that what was delivered to them in the name of an apostle, was certainly of his inditing. And this was to be known many ways; for surely we may have undoubted proofs of such a one's being the author of such a book or letter, without having seen him write it with his own hand, or having heard from his own mouth that he wrote it. "The apostles" (saith Irenæus) "having first preached the gospel, delivered it afterwards to us in the Scriptures." Now, as we have no reason to believe, from any accounts that can be depended upon, that any of those styled apostles, besides the six† whose works we now have, left any thing in writing; if these words of Irenæus be taken to relate to the whole number of the apostles, it will follow from them, that even those apostles who wrote nothing themselves, did yet deliver to their "children in Christ" such parts of the Scriptures as had come to their hands. In which case, those Scriptures, thus delivered and recommended by an apostle, must have been allowed to have the same authority, as if they had been written by that apostle himself; since he, as well as his brethren who wrote them, was under the inspiration and guidance of that Holy Spirit who, according to the promise of Christ, was to "lead them into all truth;" and therefore could not be ignorant whether the matters contained in those Scriptures were true or false. But if the general term "apostles" be limited to such of them only as composed the writings, called by Irenæus "the Scriptures;" the meaning of his words will be, that the apostles, when they had preached the gospel, (that is, the whole system of facts and doctrines which it was necessary for Christians to know and believe,) committed it to writing for the use of the churches, to serve thenceforward, as he expresses it, for "the pillar and foundation" of their faith in Christ Jesus. Those churches, therefore, were the proper evidences to prove the apostles to be the authors of those writings which they received from them. And the testimony they gave to that matter of fact, as, on the one hand, it does not appear to have been liable to any suspicion of fraud; so, on the other, it seems equally free from any probability of error, or misinformation. For they must have had certain knowledge of the character and credit of the persons who delivered those writings to them in the name of any of the apostles,* and many other indubitable proofs, both external and internal, to convince them of their being genuine, or to discover the falsehood, if they were not. Allowing, for instance, the epistles which now pass under the name of Saint Paul, to have been received during his life by the churches to which they were directed; there are in all of them many circumstances, by which they might certainly have known him to be the author. These circumstances the reader, if he has either received or written any letters of business to or from his acquaintance and friends, may easily suggest to himself, and may as easily discover them upon perusing those epistles. But it will—nay, it must—be said by those who deny these Scriptures to have been written by the apostles whose names they bear, that they were forged after their deaths, and consequently could not have been received by the churches during their lives. This, doubtless, infidels will say, (for what else can they pretend?) But I am at a loss to think how they can support their assertion, since not only the testimony of all the earliest writers of the Church, but common sense itself, is against them. For can it be imagined that the Corinthians, for example, would have

* The reader who is inclined to see the authorities upon which these several articles were founded, may consult Whitby's Prefaces to the Gospels, &c.

† These six are Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James, and Jude. Mark and Luke, though supposed with good reason to be of the number of the seventy-two disciples, were not apostles, in the strict and limited sense of that word.

* Thus Tychicus, mentioned by Saint Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, as sent by him, and most probably the bearer of that epistle, and of that to the Colossians, (iv. 7—9,) where he is also mentioned as sent to them by that apostle, together with Onesimus,—Tychicus, I say, and Onesimus, were doubtless able to give such proofs of Saint Paul's being the author of those two epistles, as the Christians of those nations must have been satisfied with, could it be supposed that they wanted other reasons to convince them of it; but this supposition, I believe, no one will think it reasonable to make.

received as genuine an epistle, not delivered to them till after the death of the apostle whose name it bore ; and yet appearing, from many circumstances therein mentioned, to have been written several years before ; unless such an extraordinary delay was very satisfactorily accounted for ? Is it not to be presumed, that in a matter of such importance, not only to themselves, but to all Christians, they would have demanded of the person, who first produced it, How he came by it ? How he knew it was written by Saint Paul, and addressed to them ? Why it was not sent at the time it was written, especially as it was evident, upon the face of the epistle itself, that it was written upon occasion of some disturbances and irregularities crept into that Church, and in answer to some questions proposed to that apostle, which required a speedy reformation and reply ? These questions, and many more, which the particulars referred to in the epistle must have suggested, the Corinthians would in common prudence have asked ; and if the impostor could not (as it is most reasonable to conclude he could not) return a satisfactory answer to those questions ; can we believe the Corinthians would have admitted, upon his bare word, or even upon probable presumptions, an epistle, which, if they acknowledged it to have been written by Saint Paul, they must thenceforward have regarded as the infallible rule of their faith and practice ? This is supposing that the first Christians (as their candid adversaries are indeed apt to suppose) acted with much less wisdom and circumspection, than any man would now act upon any momentous affair in ordinary life. And let it not be forgotten that Christianity, at its first appearance in the world, very deeply affected the temporal concerns of its professors. The profession of Christianity did not then, as it does now in some parts of the world, entitle men to, and qualify them for honours and preferments. Christians, upon barely confessing themselves such, were many times, without any crime alleged, put immediately to death ; all the advantages they reaped from a life of faith and virtue, were the peace of a quiet conscience here, and the hopes of a blessed immortality hereafter. The professing Christianity therefore was a matter of temporal deliberation. And why is it more reasonable to imagine that the people of those ages would give up all their worldly views and interests, without being convinced that it was worth their while to do it, than it is to imagine that a man in his senses, either of this or any past age, would, without a valuable consideration, surrender his estate to a stranger, and leave himself a beggar ? I say this to those people who seem to consider all the primitive Christians either as fools or knaves, enthusiasts or impostors, without being able to assign any reason for their opinion, but that there have been fools and knaves, enthusiasts and impostors, among the professors of all religions whatsoever. But in order to prove a man a fool, or an enthusiast, for embracing this or that religion, it will be necessary to shew, in the first place, that he took up his faith without duly examining the principles or facts upon which it is founded, that his faith was not properly deducible from those facts or principles, or that those principles and facts were in themselves absurd and false. These points, I say, are not to be presumed, but proved. And with regard to the question now under consideration, unless it is proved by positive and undeniable evidence, that the Scriptures upon which the Christians, who lived immediately after the times of the apostles, built their faith, were either forged, or falsified, (that is, forged in part,) it cannot, I apprehend, be fairly concluded, that they acted like fools or madmen, in forsaking all, and "taking up the cross of Christ." Let this point be once proved, and it will readily be allowed that they took up their faith without due examination ; since it must be owned that if we, at this distance, are able to discover the forgery, they, who lived at the very time when those writings first appeared, could not have wanted the means of detecting it, had they thought proper to make use of them. For as it is evident from the testimonies of the oldest Christian writers, some of whom lived very near the times of the apostles themselves, that these Scriptures were cited, read, and generally received as genuine, by the Christians of their age, and even before, they must have been forged, either in the lifetime of the apostles, or very soon after their deaths. That they were forged, and generally received as authentic, while the apostles were yet living, nobody, I imagine, will venture to assert, who considers the many circumstances and facts therein related, concerning the apostles themselves, and numberless other people then living ; any one of which being falsified, must have utterly destroyed the pretence of their having been composed by an apostle, whom some of those Scriptures affirmed to have been under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of truth. If they were forged and published soon after the deaths of the apostles, there was still great danger of the fraud's being detected, if not by many living witnesses, yet by such a tradition of facts and doctrines, whether oral or written, as, if it had been found to clash with that supposed gospel or epistle, must have rendered its authenticity suspected, unless supported by better evidence than the bare name of an apostle prefixed to it. And if it could be supposed that the bare name of an apostle was, in those times, of weight sufficient to establish the authority of any writing, though otherwise liable to sus-

picion; how came it to pass that those cunning impostors, who wrote the Gospels of Mark and Luke, did not publish them under the venerable and all-sanctifying names of the apostles? If these Scriptures, therefore, were forged and published in either of the above mentioned periods, (and for the reasons before given, the forgery could not have been of a later date,) it is highly improbable, that the imposture should have escaped detection; and had it been detected, it is equally improbable, that Christians, who staked their all upon the truth of the gospel, should receive as genuine, and acknowledge as divinely inspired, writings, which were known or even suspected to be forged. But it will perhaps be urged, that the cheat was discovered and known only by a few of the wiser sort, who, for the advancement of a good cause, thinking it at least a venial sin, a fraud which might even be styled pious, to impose upon their weaker brethren, recommended to them, under the name of an apostle, a religious treatise, which tended only to improve their piety and strengthen their faith. But this supposition will appear as groundless and improbable as any of the former, if it be considered, that the abettors, as well as the authors of the forgery, must have been Christians, (Christians, I mean, as contradistinguished from Jews, heathens, and heretics,) and men of capacities and knowledge superior to the vulgar. As Christians they could not, in those ages of persecution, have any worldly interest in promoting the cause of Christianity, and therefore could have no motive to induce them to impose upon their brethren, but a persuasion that it was lawful, at least, to "do evil, that good might come of it,"—a principle which, as men of parts and knowledge, they could not but be sensible was unworthy of a disciple of the Lord of truth and righteousness, and which is expressly condemned in the epistle to the Romans, (Rom. iii. 8,) which epistle therefore cannot be supposed to have been forged by men who acknowledged that principle and proceeded upon it. Besides, as far the greater number of the books of Scripture contain facts, as well as precepts and doctrines, these impostors, however well-intentioned, could not be assured that their imposture would not turn more to the prejudice than advantage of Christianity; since, though they might think themselves secure in the acquiescence of their weaker brethren, and the fidelity of their partners in the fraud, they had reason to apprehend the zeal and abilities of their open and avowed enemies, heathens, Jews, and heretics, who, wanting neither the means nor inclination to examine the principles of a religion which with their utmost power they endeavoured to subvert, might very probably discover their imposture, and would certainly take every advantage, which such a discovery could furnish them with, of decrying a religion which they might then with some colour have suggested, could not be maintained without fraud. This danger, which, with the same penetration that enabled them to discover a cheat that had passed upon the vulgar, they must undoubtedly have foreseen, would, it may be supposed, have checked their zeal, and rendered them cautious how they ventured upon an imposture the success of which was so very precarious.

Since, therefore, no motive can be assigned of force sufficient to induce any Christians of those times, either to contrive or support a forgery of this kind; since, had any of those Scriptures attributed to the apostles, and especially the Epistles of Saint Paul, been forged and published so early as the writings of the most ancient fathers shew them to have been known and received, it is next to impossible that the fraud should have escaped detection; and since the Christians of those ages must, in consequence of such a detection, have necessarily disowned and rejected those Scriptures as spurious; may we not, from their having acknowledged them as authentic, conclude, for the several reasons above given, that the apostles and evangelists were the undoubted authors of the writings now received under their names?

But allowing the Christians of those early ages to have been able to discover the genuine works of the apostles from any spurious writings forged in their names, and allowing those books now received into the canon of the Holy Scriptures to have been written by those authors whose names they bear, it may be demanded how we at this time can be assured, that, among the great number which have since been ascribed to them, they wrote only these? or that in such a succession of ages, these are come down to us pure and uncorrupted? To the first of these questions I answer, that as the Christians of those early ages must be acknowledged for competent judges of the authority of any books or writings ascribed to the apostles, such book or writing, as they allowed to be genuine, hath an indisputable title to that character. But to this title, no other writings ascribed to the apostles, besides those now received into the canon of Scripture, can pretend; since of most of them, especially the false gospels, we find no mention till the fourth century.

For an answer to the second question, I shall refer the learned reader to Dr Whitby's "Examen Variantium Lectionum D. Millii,"* published at the end of his second volume of Annotations on the New Testament, where he will find, that the various readings, upon which the adversaries of Christianity (among whom I reckon the clergy of the Church of Rome) have laid so great a stress, will be of

* See Whitby's Prefatory Discourse to the Four Gospels.

little service to their cause; the greatest part of them being absolutely insignificant, and 'none of them," saith that learned writer, "either changing or corrupting any article of faith, or rule of life."

And although, considering the great length of time that is past since the Scriptures were written, and the number of copies and translations that have been made of them, it is no wonder that many errors should have crept into them, either from the ignorance or inadvertency of transcribers and translators, all of which have helped to swell the sum of various readings; yet, considering, on the other hand, the number of heresies that have sprung up in every age of Christianity, all of which pretended to derive their opinions from the Scriptures—considering also the watchfulness of the Jews and heathens, those avowed enemies of the gospel, who, as appears from their writings, were no strangers to the Scriptures—it would be a still greater wonder that any material alteration should have been made in them; since whoever had attempted any such alteration, whether Christian, heretic, Jew, or heathen, could not but know it was impossible that it should escape the observation of so many eyes, as were continually prying, though with different views, into these important writings. And this seems to me the only reason of their having passed uncorrupted through the treacherous hands of the Church of Rome, who had them so long in her keeping. She was restrained from altering the Scriptures, by the fear of being detected by the Eastern Churches, who disowned her authority; and yet there is little question to be made that she would have done it, had she not fallen upon that less dangerous, though more absurd expedient, of locking them up from the laity, and assuming to herself the sole right of expounding them; a right which she hath asserted and maintained with all the artifices and cruelty that fraud and tyranny could invent. This expedient, however, though it hath hitherto preserved Popery, hath saved the Scriptures, and with them Christianity. For, considering the duration, extent, and absoluteness of her power in the West, had she altered the text of Scripture, according to the comments she has made upon it, Christians (could there have been any really such at this time, and in these parts of the world) must have been reduced to contend with the Church of Rome, not *from* the Scriptures, but *for* the Scriptures themselves. And what advantages infidelity and scepticism would have had in the meantime, is easy to imagine; since they are bold enough to dispute even now the genuineness of those Scriptures, which the very persons, whose doctrines are the most opposite to them, have been necessitated to acknowledge and maintain.

Sect. XXIV.—I am now to consider what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to the testimony of the apostles and evangelists.

Two qualities are requisite to establish the credit of a witness, namely, a perfect knowledge of the fact he gives testimony to, and a fair and unblemished character.

After what has been said in the preceding parts of this discourse concerning the evidences of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it will, I hope, be granted, that the apostles were duly qualified to be witnesses, in point of knowledge of the fact which they are brought to give testimony to. It remains, then, that we inquire into their characters, which may very clearly be collected from the tenor of their lives and conduct as preachers of the gospel, and the purity of the doctrines they taught; not to insist in favour of them upon the conclusion which may be drawn from their very enemies not having been able to fix upon them any stain or blemish, which they themselves have not acknowledged and lamented.

Their lives, then, after they had embraced Christianity, were not only irreproachable, but holy; and their conduct, as preachers of the gospel, disinterested, noble, and generous, in the most exalted degree. For they not only quitted their houses, their lands, their occupations, their friends, kindred, parents, wives, and children, but their countries also, every pursuit, and every endearment of life, in order to propagate, with infinite labour, through innumerable difficulties, and with the utmost danger, in every corner of the known world, the salvation of mankind; certain of meeting, in every new region, with new enemies and opposers; and yet requiring of those who, through their preaching, were become their friends and brethren, nothing but a bare subsistence; and sometimes labouring with their own hands, to save them even from that light and reasonable burden; disclaiming for themselves all authority, pre-eminence, and power; and teaching those ignorant and superstitious people, who, taking them for Gods, would have worshipped them, and sacrificed to them, that they were men like themselves, and servants of that one God, to whom alone worship was due. Would impostors, who are most commonly interested, vain-glorious, and ambitious, have acted in this manner? No certainly; but it may be said, enthusiasts would. Be it so. But how can it be made appear that the apostles were enthusiasts? If Christ did not rise from the dead, most assuredly he did not preach to them after his crucifixion: upon which supposition, I apprehend it will be very difficult to account for their returning to their faith in that master, whom, in his distress, they had abandoned and disowned. But if Christ did rise from the dead, and did, after his resurrec-

tion, converse with his apostles, I suppose it will be easily granted, that they had sufficient reason for believing in him, and for acting in obedience to the command given them by him, to preach the gospel throughout the world, especially when they found themselves so well qualified for that important commission, by the miraculous powers conferred upon them by the Holy Ghost, and particularly the gift of tongues, so apparently and so wisely calculated to carry on that great, that universal service. If this, I say, was the case, then surely the apostles were no enthusiasts, since they neither believed themselves without reasonable proof, nor pretended to inspiration and a divine commission, without being able to give to others sufficient evidences of both.*

Of all the admirably pure and truly divine doctrines taught by the apostles, I shall consider only two, as more peculiarly relative to the present argument; and they are, the belief of a judgment to come, and the obligation of speaking truth. That God will judge the world by Jesus Christ is a necessary article of the Christian faith; and as such, is strongly and frequently inculcated in the writings of the apostles and evangelists, of which it is needless to produce instances. And that Christians were required by these preachers of holiness to speak truth upon all occasions, the following texts will clearly evince. In Ephes. iv. 25, the apostle commands that, "putting away lying, they speak every man truth with his neighbour." And again, Colos. iii. 9, "Lie not one to another." Nay, that even the man who lies through zeal for the glory of God, is, according to their estimation, to be accounted a sinner, may be inferred from these words in Rom. iii. 7, 8, "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just." That the apostles themselves were fully persuaded of these two propositions nobody can deny, who will call to mind that they chose to suffer persecution, and death itself, rather than not "speak the things which they had seen and heard;" and that, "if in this life only they had hope, they were of all men the most miserable." Now, that any men, who firmly believed that God would punish them for speaking an untruth, though for the advancement of a good cause, should, at the hazard of their lives, and without any prospect of gain, or advantage, assert facts, which at the same time they knew to be false; should, for instance, affirm, that they saw and conversed with Jesus Christ after his resurrection, knowing or believing that he was not risen from the dead, and yet expect to be judged hereafter by that very same Jesus, is too improbable to gain credit with any, but those great believers of absurdities, the infidels and sceptics.

Sect. XXV.—But besides the many infallible tokens and evidences of the integrity of the apostles and evangelists, that may be collected from their lives and doctrines, there are also in their writings several internal marks of their veracity: some of which I shall now endeavour to point out, confining myself to such parts of their writings as belong to the present subject.

The contradictions and inconsistencies which some imagine they have discovered in the evangelical accounts of the resurrection, have been urged as arguments for setting aside the authority, and rejecting the evidence of the gospels. But these supposed contradictions having been considered in the foregoing parts of this discourse; and having, upon a close inspection, and comparing the several narratives with each other, been shewn to be shadowy and imaginary, and to lie no deeper than the superficies and surface of the words: we need not be afraid of admitting these appearances of inconsistency; since from them it may be inferred, to the advantage of the evangelists, that they did not write in concert. For had they agreed together upon giving an account of the resurrection of Christ, and each of them taken, by allotment, his several portion of that history, it is probable they would somewhere or other have dropt some intimations that the particulars omitted by them were supplied by others; and that such and such parts of their narrations were to be connected with such and such facts, related by their brethren; or they would have distinguished the several incidents by such strong and visible marks, and circumstances of time and place, &c. as might have been sufficient, at first sight, to discover their order, and keep them from being confounded with each other: some, or all of these things, I say, they would probably have done, had they written in concert. And doubtless they would, nay, they must have written in concert, had they endeavoured to impose upon the world a "cunningly devised fable;" and had they not trusted to the truth, and notoriety of the facts they related. Truth, like honesty, oftentimes neglects appearances. Hypocrisy and imposture are always guarded. And as from these seeming discordances in their accounts, we may conclude they did not write in concert, so from their agreeing in the principal and most material facts, we may infer that they wrote after the truth.† In Xiphilin and Theodosius, the two abbreviators of Dio Cassius, may be observed the like

* See Mr Locke's Chapter on Enthusiasm.

† Vide Dio Cas. Hist. Edit. Leunclav. Fol. Hanov. 1606

agreement and disagreement; the one taking notice of many particulars, which the other passes over in silence, and both of them relating the chief and most remarkable events. And as, from their both frequently making use of the very same words and expression when they speak of the same thing, it is apparent that they copied from the same original; so I believe nobody was ever absurd enough to imagine that the particulars mentioned by the one, were not taken out of Dio Cassius, merely because they are omitted by the other. And still more absurd would it be to say, as some have lately done of the evangelists, that the facts related by Theodosius are contradicted by Xiphilin, because the latter says nothing of them. But against the evangelists, it seems that all kinds of arguments may not only be employed but applauded. The case, however, of the sacred historians is exactly parallel to that of these two abbreviators. The latter extracted the particulars related in their several abridgments from the history of Dio Cassius, as the former drew the materials of their gospels from the life of Jesus Christ. The two last transcribed their relations from a certain collection of facts contained in one and the same history; the four first from a certain collection of facts contained in the life of one and the same person, laid before them by that Spirit, which was to lead them into all truth; and why the fidelity of the four transcribers should be called in question for reasons which hold equally strong against the two who are not suspected, I leave those to determine who lay such a weight upon this objection.

Another mark of the veracity of the evangelists appears in their naming the time, the scene of action, the actors, and the witnesses, of most of the facts mentioned by them; which I shall give a remarkable instance of in one relating to the present subject, the resurrection; namely, the guarding the sepulchre of Christ. The time was that of the celebration of the passover, the most solemn festival of the Jews; the scene was in Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea; and at that time crowded with Jews, who came thither from all parts of the earth to keep the passover: the actors and witnesses were the chief priests and elders, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, and the Roman soldiers who guarded the sepulchre. Now, if the story of guarding the sepulchre had been false, it is not to be doubted but the chief priests and elders, who are said to have obtained the guard, and sealed the door of the sepulchre, would by some authentic act have cleared themselves of the folly and guilt imputed to them by the evangelist, who charges the chief priests with having bribed the soldiers to tell not only a lie, but an absurd lie, that carried its own confutation with it; the soldiers, with confessing a breach of discipline, that by the military law was punishable with death; and the governor, with the suspicion at least of being capable of overlooking so heinous a crime, at the instigation of the chief priests, &c. All these several charges upon the whole government of Judea, might have been answered at once by an attestation from the chief priests, setting forth that they never demanded a guard to be set at the sepulchre, confirmed by the testimony of all the Roman officers and soldiers (many of whom were probably at Jerusalem when this gospel was written) denying that they were ever upon that guard. This not only the reputation of the chief priests, but their avowed malice to Christ, and aversion to his doctrine and religion, required; and this, even upon the supposition of the story of guarding the sepulchre being true, they would probably have done, had they been at liberty to propagate and invent what lie they pleased: but that a guard was set at the sepulchre, was in all likelihood, by the dispersion and flight of the soldiers into the city, too well known in Jerusalem for them to venture at denying it; for which reason, as I have before observed, they were obliged to invent a lie consistent with that known fact, however absurd and improbable it might appear when it came to be considered and examined. Now, as the report put into the mouths of the Roman soldiers by the chief priests and elders, is no proof of the falsehood of this fact, but rather of the contrary, so does the naming the time, the scene, the actors, and the witnesses, form a very strong presumption of its being true, since no forger of lies willingly and wittingly furnishes out the means of his own detection; especially when we consider that this story is related by that evangelist, who is said to have written nearest the time, and to have composed his gospel for those Christians who dwelt in Judea, many of whom then living were probably at Jerusalem when this thing was done.

The strict attachment and regard to truth of all the evangelists is farther manifested, in their relating of themselves and their brethren many things that, in the opinion of the world, could not but turn much to their dishonour and discredit. Such as their denying and deserting their master in his extremity, and their dulness in not understanding his predictions about his rising from the dead, though expressed in the plainest and most intelligible words. A man's confession against himself or his friends, is generally presumed to be true. If the evangelists, therefore, be allowed to be the authors of those gospels which bear their names, or if those writings are supposed to have been forged by some friends to Christianity, they must, in these instances at least, be acknowledged to relate

the truth, till some other good reason, besides that of their attachment to the truth, can be assigned for their inserting such disgraceful and dishonourable accounts of themselves and their friends.

But there is nothing that sets the veracity of the sacred writers so much above all question and suspicion, as what they tell us about the low condition, the infirmities, the sufferings, and the death of the great author and finisher of their faith, Christ Jesus. He hungered, they say, he was poor, so poor as not to "have where to lay his head;" he wept, he hid himself for fear of the Jews who sought to kill him; and when his hour drew nigh, he was dejected, sorrowful, "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:" he prayed that the cup of affliction, which was then mixing for him, might, if possible, pass from him. And though he was "strengthened by an angel from heaven," yet, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." After this he was seized like a common malefactor, abandoned by all his followers and friends, led bound, first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod, then back again to Pilate; and lastly, after enduring a thousand insults and indignities, after having been buffeted, spit upon, and scourged, was carried to suffer upon the cross the infamous and painful death of offending slaves, and the vilest criminals. And yet this hungry, houseless, suffering, dying Jesus, is by the same writers said to have fed a multitude of many thousands with five loaves and two fishes; to have commanded the fish of the sea to provide him money to pay the tribute; to have been ministered unto by angels; to have been obeyed by the winds and seas; to have had in himself, and to have imparted to his disciples, authority over unclean spirits, and the power of healing all manner of diseases; to have raised the dead by a touch, a word; to have been able to have obtained from God, whom he called his Father, an army of more than twelve legions of angels, a force sufficient, not only to have rescued him from the sufferings and death he deprecated, but to have acquired him the empire of the world; and lastly, as an instance of his being endued with a power superior even to destruction itself, he is said to have risen from the dead; to have ascended into heaven, and to sit down for ever at the right hand of God. From these accounts it is plain, that the character of Jesus Christ, as drawn up by the evangelists, is a mixture of such seeming inconsistencies, so wonderful a composition of weakness and power, humiliation and glory, humanity and divinity, that as no mere mortal could pretend to come up to it, so the wit of man would never have conceived and proposed such a one for the founder of any sect or religion. The sufferings and cross of Christ were, as Saint Paul confesses, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and foolishness to the Greeks. The Jews, it is well known, expected a temporal deliverer, an earthly prince, a glorious conquering Messiah; and were therefore so scandalized at the low condition and abject fortune of Jesus, so ill-proportioned, as they imagined, to the sublime character of the Son of God, that upon account of those human blemishes only, they rejected all the miraculous evidences of his divine mission, and put him to death as a blasphemer for taking upon him the name, without the temporal splendour and power of the Messiah. That the disciples of Jesus were tainted with the like prejudices with their unbelieving brethren the Jews, is very natural to believe, and may be certainly collected from the writings of the evangelists, from whom we learn, that when, convinced by his miracles, his doctrine, and his life, they had acknowledged him to be the Messiah, they were so offended at what he told them of his sufferings and death, that they refused to believe him, and "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee," (Matt. xvi. 22.) The despicable condition, the sufferings and death of Christ, being admitted, I think it impossible to give one probable reason for supposing that the apostles and the evangelists invented the other more than human part of his character. Had he wrought no miracles, had he not risen from the dead, their religious prejudices, as they were Jews, must have withheld them for ever from acknowledging him for their Messiah; and yet it is notorious, that not only they themselves acknowledged him as such, but endeavoured to persuade their unbelieving brethren, that "God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ." This was the great article, the foundation stone, upon which the whole superstructure of Christianity was raised; and to prove this article, they appeal to his miracles, as so many evidences of his divine mission. But here *modern* unbelievers (for Celsus, who lived nearest those times, admits all the miracles of Christ, but imputes them to his skill in magic) come in with their suspicions, and pretend to call in question the accounts given us of these miracles in the evangelists; which, without any proof, they are pleased to take for forgeries: in answer to which, (not to insist upon the improbability that any man, or any set of men in their senses, should venture to appeal to their enemies for the truth of facts, which they themselves knew to be false, especially when those enemies had not only the means of detecting them, but the inclination and power to punish

them for their impostures: not to insist, I say, upon this topic, nor upon that which I just now mentioned, of its being impossible to assign any motive that could induce them to be guilty of such a forgery,) I shall only observe, that allowing them to have been so shameless and so wicked as to invent and propagate a set of lies in order to get credit to their master and his religion, it is strange they should not go one step farther, and suppress, at least, if not deny, his infirmities, his sufferings, and his crucifixion, and so remove that stumbling-block, which they could not but know would be the greatest obstacle to the advancement of their religion, as well among the Gentiles as the Jews. But it will be urged, perhaps, that his sufferings and his crucifixion were too public to be denied; and so, say the evangelists, were most of his miracles: and this undoubtedly was the reason why they were acknowledged by Celsus. To suppose therefore that the evangelists, for fear of being detected, would confess truths, which manifestly prejudiced their great design of propagating the faith in Christ Jesus, and yet would not by the same fear of detection be restrained from relating untruths, because they might imagine them to be advantageous to their cause, is no mark of equity and candour, but of partiality and prejudice. But it will possibly be said, (for what will not infidels *say?* and I will add, how strange soever it may sound, what will they not *believe?*) that the Scriptures were forged long after the events recorded in them, and consequently, long after all the evidences of their truth or falsehood were extinct or lost. In answer to this, it may be again demanded, as in the case of the evangelists, How came these late forgers to choose the suffering crucified Jesus for the author of their religion? And why, since they were at liberty to say what they pleased, without any apprehension of being discovered, why, I say, did they relate such things both of him and his disciples, as, in the opinion of the world, could not fail of discrediting the faith they preached in his name, and by an authority pretended to be derived from him and his disciples? But, without entering upon these considerations, it may be sufficient barely to deny this charge, till they who insist upon it shall be able to make it good, by shewing, either from authentic testimonies, or even probable and presumptive arguments, when they were forged? by whom? and to what end? Till they are able to do this, (which I will venture to pronounce will never be,) we have a right to insist, for the reasons above given, that the Scriptures of the New Testament were written by those whose names they bear, and that all the facts related in them are most unquestionably true.

Before I quit this subject, I cannot forbear taking notice of one other mark of integrity which appears in all the compositions of the sacred writers, and particularly the evangelists, and that is, the simple, unaffected, unornamental and unostentatious manner in which they deliver truths so important and sublime, and facts so magnificent and wonderful, as are capable, one would think, of lighting up a flame of oratory, even in the dullest and coldest breasts. They speak of an angel descending from heaven to foretell the miraculous conception of Jesus, of another proclaiming his birth attended by a "multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;" of his star appearing in the east; of angels ministering to him in the wilderness; of his glory in the mount; of a voice twice heard from heaven, saying "This is my beloved Son;" of innumerable miracles performed by him, and by his disciples in his name; of his knowing the thoughts of men; of his foretelling future events; of prodigies and wonders accompanying his crucifixion and death; of an angel descending in terrors, opening his sepulchre, and frighting away the soldiers, who were set to guard it; of his rising from the dead, ascending into heaven, and pouring down, according to his promise, the various and miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles and disciples. All these amazing incidents do these inspired historians relate nakedly and plainly, without any of the colourings and heightenings of rhetoric, or so much as a single note of admiration; without making any comment or remark upon them, or drawing from them any conclusion in honour either of their master or themselves, or to the advantage of the religion they preached in his name; but contenting themselves with relating the naked truth, whether it seems to make for them or against them; without either magnifying on the one hand, or palliating on the other, they leave their cause to the unbiassed judgment of mankind, seeking, like genuine apostles of the Lord of truth, to convince rather than to persuade; and therefore, coming as Saint Paul speaks of his own preaching, "not with excellency of speech, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, that," adds he, "your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, 5.) And let it be remembered that he who speaks this, wanted not learning, art, or eloquence, as is evident from his speeches recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and from the testimony of that critic Longinus, who, reckoning up the Grecian orators, places among them Paul of Tarsus;* and surely, had they been left solely to the suggestions and guidance of human wisdom, they would not have failed to

* Vide Long. Frag. Edit. Pearce.

lay hold on such topics, as the wonders of their master's life, and the transcendent purity and perfection of the noble, generous, benevolent morality contained in his precepts, furnished them with. These topics, I say, greater than ever Tully, or Demosthenes, or Plato, were possessed of, mere human wisdom would doubtless have prompted them to make use of, in order to recommend in the strongest manner the religion of Christ Jesus to mankind, by turning their attention to the divine part of his character, and hiding as it were in a blaze of heavenly light and glory, his infirmities, his sufferings, and his death. And had they upon such topics as these, and in such a cause, called in to their assistance all arts of composition, rhetoric, and logic, who would have blamed them for it? Not those persons, I presume, who, dazzled and captivated with the glittering ornaments of human wisdom, make a mock at the simplicity of the gospel, and think it wit to ridicule the style and language of the Holy Scriptures. But the all-wise Spirit of God, by whom these sacred writers were guided into all truth, thought fit to direct or permit them to proceed in a different method,—a method, however, very analogous to that in which he hath been pleased to reveal himself to us in the great book of nature, the stupendous frame of the universe; all whose wonders he hath judged it sufficient to lay before us in silence, and expects from our observations the proper comments and deductions which, having endued us with reason, he hath enabled us to make. And though a careless and superficial spectator may fancy he perceives even in this fair volume many inconsistencies, defects, and superfluities; yet to a diligent, unprejudiced, and rational inquirer, who will take the pains to examine the laws, consider and compare the several parts, and regard their use and tendency, with reference to the whole design of this amazing structure, as far as his short abilities can carry him, there will appear, in those instances which he is capable of knowing, such evident characters of wisdom, goodness, and power, as will leave him no room to doubt of their author, or to suspect that in those particulars which he hath not examined, or to a thorough knowledge of which he cannot perhaps attain, there is nothing but folly, weakness, and malignity. The same thing may be said of the written book,—that second volume (if I may so speak) of the revelation of God, the Holy Scriptures. For as in the first, so also in this are there many passages, that to a cursory unobserving reader appear idle, unconnected, unaccountable, and inconsistent with those marks of truth, wisdom, justice, mercy, and benevolence, which in others are so visible, that the most careless and inattentive cannot but discern them. And even these, many of them at least, will often be found, upon a closer and stricter examination, to accord and coincide with the other more plain, and more intelligible passages, and to be no heterogeneous parts of one and the same wise and harmonious composition. In both, indeed, in the natural as well as the moral book of God, there are, and ever will be, many difficulties, which the wit of man may never be able to resolve; but will a wise philosopher, because he cannot comprehend every thing he sees, reject for that reason all the truths that lie within his reach, and let a few inexplicable difficulties overbalance the many plain and infallible evidences of the finger of God, which appear in all parts, both of his created and written works? Or will he presume so far upon his own wisdom, as to say, God ought to have expressed himself more clearly? The point and exact degree of clearness, which will equally suit the different capacities of men in different ages and countries, will, I believe, be found more difficult to fix than is imagined; since what is clear to one man in a certain situation of mind, time, and place, will inevitably be obscure to another, who views it in other positions, and under other circumstances. How various and even contradictory are the readings and comments, which several men, in the several ages and climates of the world, have made upon nature! And yet her characters are equally legible, and her laws equally intelligible in all times and in all places; "there is no speech nor language where her voice is not heard." Her "sound is gone out through all the earth, and her words to the ends of the world." All these misinterpretations, therefore, and misconstructions of her works, are chargeable only upon mankind, who have set themselves to study them with various degrees of capacity, application, and impartiality. The question then should be, Why hath God given men such various talents? and not, Why hath not God expressed himself more clearly? And the answer to this question, as far as it concerns man to know, is, that God will require of him according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. If what is necessary for all to know, is knowable by all, those men, upon whom God hath been pleased to bestow capacities and faculties superior to the vulgar, have certainly no just reason to complain of his having left them materials for the exercise of those talents, which, if all things were equally plain to all men, would be of no great advantage to the possessors. If, therefore, there are in the sacred writings, as well as in the works of nature, many passages hard to be understood, it were to be wished that the wise and learned, instead of being offended at them, and teaching others to be so too, would be persuaded that both God and man expect that they would set themselves to consider

and examine them carefully and impartially, and with a sincere desire of discovering and embracing the truth, not with an arrogant unphilosophical conceit of their being already sufficiently wise and knowing. And then I doubt not but most of those objections to revelation, which are now urged with the greatest confidence, would be cleared up and removed, like those formerly made to creation, and the being and providence of God, by those most ignorant, most absurd, and yet most self-sufficient pretenders to reason and philosophy, the atheists and sceptics.

Sect. XXVI. — To these internal evidences of the veracity (and may I not add inspiration) of the apostles and evangelists, I shall beg leave to subjoin two external proofs of great weight in an inquiry into the reasons we have for giving credit to their testimony, the one negative, the other positive.

The negative proof is contained in this proposition, namely, that out of the great number of facts related by the sacred writers, public and extraordinary as they are said to have been, not one, in the course of now almost seventeen hundred years, hath ever been disproved or falsified. Denied, indeed, many of them have been, and still are; but there is a great deal of difference between denying and disproving. To prove a fact to be false, it is necessary that the positive and probable evidence brought against it should overbalance that produced in support of it. In opposition to the testimony of the disciples of Jesus Christ, asserting that he was risen from the dead, the chief priests and elders of the Jews affirmed, that his disciples stole away his body, and then gave out that he was risen; in maintenance of which charge they produced, as Saint Matthew tells us, (xxviii. 13,) the Roman soldiers, who were set to guard the sepulchre, who deposed that "his disciples came by night and stole him away while they slept." Not to insist again upon the absurdity of this report, as it stands in the evangelist, and taking it as it was afterwards prudently amended by the Sanhedrim, * and propagated by an express deputation from them to all the synagogues of the Jews throughout the world, in which, without making any mention of the Roman guard, they say no more than that the disciples came by night, and stole away the body; taking it, I say, in the manner in which those wise counsellors were, upon mature deliberation, pleased to put it, it may be sufficient to observe, that this theft charged upon the disciples, was so far from being proved, that it was not so much as ever inquired into. And yet the accusers were the chief priests and elders of the Jews; men in high reverence and authority with the people, vested with all the power of the state, and consequently furnished with all the means of procuring information, and of gaining or extorting a confession. And what were the accused? men of low birth, mean fortunes, without learning, without credit, without support; and who out of pusillanimity and fear had deserted their master, upon the first occasion offered of shewing their fidelity and attachment to him. And can it be imagined that the chief priests and council would have made no inquiry into a fact, the belief of which they took so much pains to propagate, had they themselves been persuaded of the truth of it? And had they inquired into it, can it be supposed that out of such a number of mean persons as must have been privy to it, no one, either from honesty or religion, the fear of punishment or hope of reward, would have betrayed the secret, and given them such intelligence as might have enabled them to put the question of the resurrection out of all dispute? For had it been once proved that the disciples stole away the body of Jesus, their words would hardly have been taken for his resurrection. But how did these poor men act? Conscious of no fraud and imposture, they remained in Jerusalem a week or more, after the report of their having stolen their master's body was spread over the city, and in about a month returned thither again; not long after which they asserted boldly to the face of their powerful enemies and accusers, the chief priests and elders, that "God had raised from the dead that same Jesus whom they had crucified." And what was the behaviour of these learned rabbins, these watchful guardians of the Jewish church and state? Why, they suffered the disciples of Jesus, charged by their order with an imposture tending to disturb the government, to continue unquestioned at Jerusalem, and to depart from thence unmolested. And when, upon their return thither, they had caused them to be seized, and brought before them, for "preaching through Jesus the resurrection of the dead," (Acts, iv.) what did they say to them? Did they charge them with having stolen away the body of their master? Nothing like it. On the contrary, not being able to gainsay the testimony given by the apostles to the resurrection of Jesus, vouched by a miracle just then performed by them in his name, they ordered them to withdraw, and "conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no farther among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

* Justin. Martyr. Dial. cum Tryph. Jud.

Peter and John answered, and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had farther threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them," (Acts, iv. 15—21.) Who, after hearing this account, could ever imagine that the disciples stole the body of Jesus? or that the chief priests and elders themselves believed they did? But it may perhaps be objected, that this account comes from Christian writers; and could the objectors expect to meet with it in Jewish authors? We might indeed expect to find in their writings some proofs of this charge upon the disciples; and had there been any, the chief priests, and the other adversaries of Christ, would doubtless not have failed to produce them. But the progress that Christianity made at that time in Jerusalem, is a stronger argument than even their silence, that no proof of this charge either was or could be made. Could the apostles have had the impudence to preach, and could so many thousand Jews have been weak enough to believe upon their testimony, that Christ was risen from the dead, had it been proved that his disciples stole away his body? An infidel may, if he pleases, believe this, but let him account for it if he can.

I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this pretended theft of the disciples, because it is the *only fact* I know of, that hath been set up in opposition to the many facts upon which the evidence of the resurrection is founded. How defective it is in point of proof, whether probable or positive, I need not point out to the reader. But I cannot help observing, that those who deny that any guard was placed at the sepulchre, take from it the only positive evidence that was ever brought to support it, namely, the depositions of the Roman soldiers.

Among the many extraordinary particulars related by the sacred writers, the miracles performed by Christ and his apostles, as they were almost without number, and wrought most commonly in public, in the presence of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, yielded the fairest occasion to the opposers of the gospel of overturning the credit of the evangelical historians. And yet the pitiful solutions, which Pagan and Jewish writers have been reduced to make use of, in order to take off the conclusion drawn from these miracles by the Christians, form a very strong presumption, that they were not to be disproved. Some, as Celsus,* have imputed them to magic; others, as the Jews, have attributed them to the ineffable name of God, which, say they,† Jesus stole out of the temple.

* See Origen contra Celsum.
† See Univ. Hist. vol. iv. p. 200. note T.

Both of them have admitted the facts. I shall not go about to shew the absurdity of either of those two ways of accounting for those miraculous operations. But I must hence take occasion to beg the reader to reflect a little upon the strange perverseness of the human mind, the vanity of reason, and the force of prejudice. Celsus believed magic, the Jews had faith in amulets; and yet both one and the other disbelieved Christianity!

SECT. XXVII. — The positive proof of the veracity of the sacred writers is founded on the exact accomplishment of the predictions of our Saviour and his apostles recorded in the New Testament.

That I may not draw out this article into an excessive and unnecessary length, I shall make no remarks upon those predictions, whose accomplishment is to be found in the Scriptures themselves; some of which I have already taken notice of. The Scriptures, infidels perhaps will say, were written after these events, and the predictions therefore probably adapted to them. But they who make this objection will gain little by it, since, if they admit the events, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. Besides, the reader himself may, with very little pains, find out and compare these predictions with their several completions.

The prophecies I shall produce, relate to the different states of the Jews and Gentiles, different not only from each other, but very different from that in which they both were at the time when these prophecies were written: to have a perfect understanding of which, it will be necessary to take a general view of the religious state (for that is principally regarded in these prophecies) of the nations distinguished by the names of Jews and Gentiles.

From the time of the covenant, or compact, which God was pleased to make with Abraham and his descendants, and to renew with the whole body of the Israelites under Moses, the Jews became the peculiar people of God,— a phrase sufficiently justified and explained by the terms or conditions of the covenant, which, on the part of the Israelites, were the taking God only for their Lord, and paying obedience to the law, the ceremonial as well as moral law, which he had given them. On the part of God, were stipulated temporal blessings, and his almighty protection to the Jews, as long as they should adhere to the conditions entered into by them. By virtue of this covenant, the Jews acknowledged God for their King, and God governed them as his subjects, by his deputies and viceroys, the prophets, judges, and kings of Israel. Moses, the mediator of this covenant, was the first of these deputies; and the Messiah, who was to

be the mediator of a new covenant, was to be the last. By him the new covenant was to be offered, first, indeed, to the Jews, with whom the covenant mediated by Moses was till then to be in force. But the other was not to be limited to that people only. The Gentiles, that is, all the nations of the earth, who were no parties to the former covenant, were to be invited to accede to this; and all those, of whatsoever nation they were, who should acknowledge the Messiah as a King appointed by God to reign over them, were to be admitted into this covenant, and be reputed thenceforward the people of God. But as the limits of this divine empire were to be altered and enlarged, it became necessary to alter and enlarge the terms of government. The ceremonial law was national and local: and though, without some such religious and political bond of union, the Jews would not in all probability have long continued the separate and peculiar people of God, yet, as most of the duties prescribed by that law were confined to the holy land, and even to the holy city of Jerusalem, the Gentiles, who were now to be taken into the covenant, could not possibly comply with it. This therefore was of necessity to be abolished. But the moral law, the basis and end of the former covenant, was in like manner to be the end and basis of the new one. To this both the Gentiles and Jews could pay obedience, as well as to the other terms superadded to it in the new covenant, namely, the acknowledging the Messiah for their King; and, as an outward token of their allegiance and accession to this covenant, receiving baptism, and commemorating from time to time, by the celebration of the Eucharist, the sealing this covenant on the part of God by the death of Christ. Which two sacraments, properly so called, may be styled the ceremonial law of the Christians, as circumcision and other ritual duties were of the Jews.

Of the twelve tribes of Israel, who were parties to the Mosaical covenant, ten fell at once from their allegiance to God under Jeroboam; and ceasing from that time to be the people or subjects of God, he ceased to be their King; and withdrawing his protection, suffered them to be carried into a captivity, from which they never afterwards returned; but, being lost and confounded with the nations among whom they were transplanted, were thenceforward no more heard of as a distinct and separate people. The two remaining tribes were then the only people of God; and as such, though often punished by him for their frequent transgressions of his laws, and even carried captive to Babylon, were, by his providence, brought back again to the land of Canaan, and restored to a capacity of complying with the terms of their covenant, by the rebuilding the city and temple of Jerusalem. From that time they were very exact in their observance of the ceremonial law, but had most grossly corrupted the moral law, and rendered it, as Christ told them, of no effect, by the comments and traditions of their scribes and pharisees. This was the state of the Jews, when Jesus the Messiah, that great Prophet and King foretold by Moses and all the prophets, came to offer them a new covenant.

The state of the Gentiles was far more deplorable. They had for many ages transferred their obedience from the one supreme God, Creator of heaven and earth, to his creatures, or to deities of their own devising; under whose imaginary protection they had ranged themselves by nations and communities; and had become, almost in the same sense as the Israelites were styled the people of God, the people of the Egyptian Isis, Assyrian Belus, Athenian Pallas, Ephesian Diana, and Capitolian Jove, &c. But there was this farther difference between them: the God of the Israelites, like a righteous and equitable sovereign, had given his people a law, to be the rule of their obedience, or rather, had confirmed and enforced that original law, which, from the very beginning, he had written in their hearts, that is, the reason of all mankind, adding to it such other institutions as their particular situation then required. While the Gentiles, having, by their idolatry, fallen from their obedience to that original universal law, were left thenceforward, like outlaws and rebels, to frame to themselves such rules, both moral and religious, as the fancied caprice of their deities, or their own perverted reason, should suggest; whence it came to pass, that they were overrun with immorality and superstition. And though some of the wisest among them, by following the yet glimmering light of reason, had become sensible of many of their grossest errors, and had endeavoured to reform some abuses, yet had superstition taken so strong a hold on the majority, that, till that was entirely rooted out, it was impossible to bring them back to what is called the religion of nature, that is, the religion of reason; were we to allow those wise men to have been as well acquainted with it, in all its branches, as, since Christianity, some have pretended to be. But with the superstition of their countries, those wise men thought it better to comply than to contend. And had they attacked it with the intrepidity and industry of the apostles, it is much to be questioned, whether, with all their eloquence and logic, they would have gained the victory. Such was the dark and hopeless condition of the Gentiles.

In this state of the Jews and Gentiles, our Saviour, after having represented to the former, under the parable of a "certain house-

holder who planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen," (Matt. xxi. 33—44,) the righteous dealings of God to them, and the ill returns they had made to him, by not only refusing him the fruits, but murdering the servants he had sent to demand them, and lastly his Son; and after having extorted from them a confession that those wicked husbandmen ought to be miserably punished, and the vineyard taken from them, and given to "other husbandmen, who should render him the fruits in their season," spoke to them the following words:—"Did you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof: and whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." By these words are plainly signified, 1*st*, The transferring the kingdom of God from the Jews to the Gentiles; 2*dly*, The odedience of the Gentiles; and 3*dly*, The miserable punishment of the Jews, for their having rejected and murdered the Son of God. There are many other prophecies relating to each of these events scattered up and down the Gospels, which I think it needless to produce, this being so very full and explicit. I shall therefore set about shewing the exact accomplishment of it in its several parts.

The kingdom of God, as may be collected from what is said above, denotes the spiritual or moral dominion of God over moral subjects, that is, free agents; and by the people of God are signified such free agents as freely and voluntarily acknowledge the sovereignty of God, by worshipping him, and receiving and obeying all those laws, whether natural or revealed, which appear to have been enacted by him. The Jews, therefore, by rejecting Jesus Christ, who proved himself to have been commissioned and sent by God, not only from the testimony of Moses and all their prophets, the holiness of his life and doctrine, and the numberless miracles he wrought among them, but still more plainly, if possible, by his rising from the dead, and empowering his disciples to work the same mighty signs and wonders in his name; the Jews, I say, by rejecting this Messenger, this Son of God, and refusing to receive the laws which he proposed to them in his Father's name, evidently renounced their allegiance to God, and ceased to be his people or subjects. And the Gentiles, on the other hand, by renouncing their vices and idolatrous superstitions, returning to the worship of God, and receiving his Messiah, together with the laws proposed to them by him in the name of God, as evidently put themselves under the dominion of God, acknowledged his empire, and became the people or subjects of God. And hence appears what is meant by the kingdom of God being taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. God removed the throne, whereon David and his posterity had sat as his substitutes and viceroys, from among the Jews, who renounced his authority, and from earth to heaven; and placing it at his right hand, and setting upon it his Messiah, his only Son, gave him for his subjects, not one nation only, but all nations, and kindreds, and people, and all the ends of the earth for his dominion. That the kingdom of God was in this sense, and in this manner, actually transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles, is too notorious to need any proof. The Jews as a nation rejected the gospel, and persisted in their refusal of the Messiah until the final destruction of their holy city and temple; and what is yet more strange, still persevere in their obstinacy. Whereas the Gentiles embraced it so universally, that within a few centuries after Christ, almost the whole Roman empire, that is, almost all the then known world, forsook idolatry and became Christian. And God, on his part, testified that he entered into covenant with them, and accepted their allegiance, by pouring upon them the gifts of his Holy Spirit; as he signified, on the other hand, his renunciation of the Mosaical covenant, by not only suffering the seat of his empire, the city and temple of Jerusalem, to be utterly destroyed, but permitting the Jews also to be banished from the Holy Land, and scattered through all the nations of the earth. And thus was this prophecy most exactly accomplished in all its parts.

Sect. XXVIII.—Besides the general change in the state of the Jews and Gentiles expressed in this prophecy, many particulars relating to the condition of the Jewish nation were most precisely foretold by our Saviour, Christ; as first, The destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; secondly, The signs and wonders preceding that destruction; thirdly, The miseries of the Jews before, at, and after the famous siege of that city; fourthly, The dispersion of that reprobated people; fifthly, The duration of their calamity; and sixthly, Their restoration.

"Our Saviour foretold the destruction of the temple, after it had stood almost five hundred years, in these words, 'Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down,' (Mark, xiii. 2.) And this prediction was completed by Titus,* who, saith Josephus, commanded his soldiers 'to

* See, for this and most of the following articles, Dr Whitby's General Preface, which, together with his other Preface, I would recommend to the perusal of all those who read for the sake of learning the truth, and not for amusement only.

dig up the foundations both of the temple and the city.' And both the Jewish Talmud and Maimonides add, that Terentius Rufus, the captain of his army, did, with a ploughshare, tear up the foundations of the temple.

"With like exactness and particularity did our Lord foretell the ruin of the city of Jerusalem: 'The days,' saith he, 'shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and shall not leave thee one stone upon another.' Now, that the event completely answered the prediction, is evident from the Jewish historian, who tells us expressly, that 'Titus having commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, this so was fully done by levelling the whole compass of the city, except three towers, that they who came to see it, were persuaded it would never be built again.' The same historian informs us, that when Vespasian besieged Jerusalem, his army 'compassed the city round about, and kept them in on every side;' and though it was judged a great and almost impracticable work to compass the whole city with a wall, 'yet Titus animating his soldiers to attempt it, they, in three days, built a wall of thirty-nine furlongs, having thirteen castles on it, and so cut off all hopes, that any of the Jews within the city should escape.'

"In the 21st chapter of Saint Luke, Christ, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, says, (ver. 11,) 'and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.'

"Now, to omit the frequent earthquakes that happened in other places in the times of Claudius and Nero, Josephus informs us, that there happened in Judea and Jerusalem 'an immense tempest, and vehement winds, with rain, and frequent lightnings, and dreadful thundering, and extreme roarings of the quaking earth, which manifested to all that the world was disturbed at the destruction of men;' and that these prodigies portended no small mischiefs. Josephus hath a particular chapter of the manifest signs of the approaching desolation of the Jews; which Tacitus, a Roman historian of that age, almost epitomizes in these words: 'Armies seemed to meet in the clouds, and glittering weapons were there seen; the temple seemed to be in a flame, with fire issuing from the clouds, and a voice more than human was heard, declaring that the deities were quitting the place; which was attended with the sound of a great motion, as if they were departing.' Josephus adds, what Tacitus also touches upon, that the great gate of the temple, which twenty men could scarcely shut, and which was made fast by bolts and bars, 'was seen to open of its own accord; that a sword appeared hanging over the city; that a comet was seen pointing down upon it for a whole year together; and that before the sun went down, there were seen in the clouds armies in battle array, and chariots compassing the country, and investing the cities,—a thing so strange,' saith he, 'that it would pass for a fable, were there not still men living to attest it.' So particular an account have we of the fearful sights and signs from heaven mentioned by our Lord.

"Our blessed Lord is as express in the prediction of the miseries which should befall that sinful nation; miseries so great as to admit no parallel. 'There shall be,' saith he, 'great tribulation, such as never happened from the beginning of the world to this time,' (Matt. xxiv. 21.) Which words Josephus seems to have transcribed, when he says, 'Never was any nation more wicked, nor ever did a city suffer as they did.' Nay, in another place, he goes so far as to say, 'All the miseries which all mankind had suffered from the beginning of the world, were not to be compared with those the Jewish nation did then suffer.' And indeed, the account he gives of the numbers who perished in that siege is almost incredible; and much more so is what the Talmud and other Jewish writers mention of the slaughter, which Hadrian's army made of them fifty-two years after, when they rebelled under Barchochebas, and were besieged in the city Bitter. And yet our Saviour having farther said, 'That wherever the carcass was (that is, the Jews) there should the eagles, (that is, the Roman armies) be gathered together,' (Matt. xxiv. 28.) they were accordingly harassed and destroyed throughout the Roman empire. 'When,' saith Josephus, 'the Romans had no enemies left in Judea, the danger reached to many of them living the remotest from it;" for many of them perished at Alexandria, at Cyrene, and in other cities of Egypt, to the number of sixty thousand, in all the cities of Syria. In a word, Eleazar, in Josephus, having reckoned many places where they were cruelly slaughtered, concludes with saying, 'It would be too long to speak of all those places in particular.'

"Again, our Saviour adds, 'That they should be led captive into all nations.' Accordingly, Josephus informs us, 'that the number of Jewish captives was ninety-seven thousand;' that of them 'Titus sent many to Egypt, and most of them he dispersed into the Roman provinces;' and so exactly fulfilled this prediction."

The duration of the calamity of the Jews, and their restoration, are signified in these words:

"'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,' Luke, xxi. 24. This so exactly came to

pass, that Vespasian commanded the whole land of Judea to be sold to those Gentiles that would buy it; and Hadrian, about sixty-three years after, made a law, that 'no Jew should come into the region round about Jerusalem,' as Aristo Pellæus, who was himself a Jew, and flourished in the very time of Hadrian, relates. 'Thus,' saith Eusebius, 'it came to pass that the Jews being banished thence, and there being a conflux thither of aliens, it became a city and colony of the Romans, and was in honour of the emperor (Hadrian) named Ælia.' 'Jerusalem,' saith Christ, 'shall be thus trodden down,'* or subject to the Gentiles, 'till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;' that is, till, by the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, the fulness of the Gentiles to be converted to it should come in with them: 'For blindness,' saith the apostle, 'hath happened to the Jews, till the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and then all Israel shall be saved,' Rom. xi. 25, 26, and with them also the yet heathen Gentiles. 'For if,' saith he, 'the casting away of the Jews was the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be to it, but even life from the dead?' Rom. xi. 15. And again, 'If the fall of them were the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more shall their fulness be the fulness of the Gentiles?' Rom. xi. 12. Now, here it is especially observable, that Julian the Apostate designed to defeat this prophecy of Christ, resolved on the rebuilding of the city and the temple of Jerusalem in its old station, which was till his time left in ruins, Ælia being built without the circuit of it. For in his epistle to the community of the Jews, he writes thus: 'The holy city of Jerusalem, which you have so long desired to see inhabited, rebuilding by my own labours, I will dwell in.' This he began with an endeavour to build that temple, in which alone the Jews would offer up their prayers and sacrifices; but the immediate hand of Providence soon forced the workmen to desist from that unhappy enterprise. Ammianus Marcellinus, an heathen, who lived in those very times, gives us the story thus: 'that Julian endeavoured to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem with vast expense, and gave it in charge to Alypius of Antioch to hasten the work, and to the governor of the province to assist him in it; in which work when Alypius was earnestly employed, and the governor of the province was assisting, terrible balls of flame bursting forth near the foundation, with frequent assaults, and burning divers times the workmen, rendered the place inaccessible; and thus the fire obstinately repelling them, the work ceased.'

* The Greek word is *πατουμένη*, possessed and trodden by the feet of the Gentiles.

"The story is very signal and remarkable for many circumstances: as 1*st*, The persons that relate it,—Ammianus Marcellinus an heathen; Zemuch David a Jew, who confesses that Julian was '*divinitus impeditus*, hindered by God' in this attempt; Nazianzen and Chrysostom among the Greeks; Saint Ambrose and Ruffinus among the Latins, who flourished at the very time when this was done; Theodoret and Sozomen, orthodox historians; Philostorgius an Arian; Socrates, a favourer of the Novatians, who wrote the story within the space of fifty years after the thing was done, and whilst the eye-witnesses of the fact were yet surviving.

"2*dly*, The time when it was performed,—not in the reign of Christian emperors, but of the most bitter enemies of Christians, when they were forced to hide, and had not liberty of speaking for themselves. Observe,

"3*dly*, With what confidence Christians urge this matter of fact,—against the Jews, as a convincing demonstration of the expiration of their legal worship, and of the certainty of Christian faith; against the heathen philosophers, inquiring, 'What the wise men of the world can say to these things;' and against the emperor Theodosius, to deter him from requiring them to rebuild a synagogue, which had been lately burnt by a Christian bishop.

"4*thly* and lastly, The unquestionable evidence of the thing,—'This,' say the Christians, 'all men freely do believe and speak of; it is in the mouths of all men, and is not denied even by the atheists themselves; and if it seem incredible to any one, he may repair for the truth of it both to the witnesses of it yet living, and to them who have heard it from their mouths; yea, they may view the foundations lying still bare and naked; and if you ask the reason, you will meet with no other account besides that which I have given; and of this all we Christians are witnesses, these things being done not long since in our own time.' So Saint Chrysostom."

The reader, who is inclined to see many particulars of the predictions of our Saviour, which relate to this remarkable catastrophe, and which I have omitted for brevity's sake, and how they were verified by the event, will do well to consult Dr Whitby's Preface, from whence the above articles are taken.

The observations I have to make on these prophecies are as follow:

1*st*, The common objection made to prophecies in general, that they are so obscure and figurative, as not to be expounded but by the event, cannot be urged against these, which are conceived in words as simple and intelligible as those made use of by the historian, who relates the events corresponding with them.

2*dly*, It is very remarkable, that of the four

evangelists, Saint John alone, who is said to have survived the destruction of Jerusalem, makes no mention either of these prophecies, or their accomplishment. Of the other three, in whose Gospels they are to be found, Saint Matthew and Saint Mark died confessedly before that period; the time of Saint Luke's death is uncertain. May we not then from hence very fairly conclude, that this remarkable silence of the beloved disciple, with regard to prophecies of such importance to the credit of his Lord and his religion, was ordered from above, lest unbelievers should say, what some have said of the predictions of Daniel, that they were written after the event?

3dly, As to the prediction relating to the duration of the calamity of the Jewish people, and their restoration, though that is the only one of all those above-cited not yet perfectly accomplished, I beg leave, however, to observe, that not only the miraculous defeating of the Emperor Julian's attempt to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem, but the present extraordinary condition of the Jews, is such a warrant and proof that this prophecy also will have its accomplishment in due time, as cannot fail of powerfully striking those who will open their eyes to view it. To induce the unobserving and unthinking people of this age to do this, and to assist them in considering this living evidence of the truth of Christianity which lies within their notice, and even at their very doors, I shall lay before them some observations of an excellent French author* upon this subject, whom I choose rather to translate than to give his arguments in my own words.

SECT. XXIX.—"† But neither the dispersion of the Jews into all nations, nor the general contempt into which they are fallen, are so extraordinary, as their preservation for so many ages, notwithstanding this their dispersion throughout the earth, and the universal contempt which all nations have for them.

"Without a singular providence, a people disunited, and divided into an infinite number of distinct families, banished into countries, whose language and customs were different from theirs, must have been mingled and confounded with other nations, and all traces of them must these many ages past have entirely disappeared. For they not only subsist no longer in a body politic, but there is not a single city where they are allowed to live according to their own laws, or to create magistrates of their own; neither are they held together by any public exercise of their religion. Their priests are without employment, their sacrifices are suppressed. Their feasts cannot be solemnized but in one only place, and to that they are not permitted to repair.

"By what miracle, then, have they been preserved amid so many nations, without any of those means which keep other people united? How comes it to pass, that having been scattered, like so many imperceptible grains of dust, among all nations, they have notwithstanding been able to subsist longer than any, and even to survive the extinction of them all?

"Who can, at this day, pick out the ancient Romans from the numerous crowds of people who have thrown themselves into Italy? Who can point out one single family of old Gaul from those of another original? Who can make the like separation in Spain, between the ancient Spaniards and the Goths who conquered it? The face of the world is changed, both in the east and west; and all nations are mixed and blended in a hundred different manners; it is only upon conjectures, and those oftentimes very frivolous, that a single family can trace up its original beyond the public revolutions of the state.

"But the Jews, by a tradition which no calamity, whether public or private, hath been able to interrupt, can go back as far as the ancient stock of Abraham. They may be mistaken in allotting themselves to this or that tribe, because since their dispersion they have not any public registers; (which, by the way, is a proof that their law is abolished, since neither the priests nor the Levites can ascertain by any certain monuments that they are of the family of Aaron, and of the tribe of Levi:) but every father hath taken care to tell his children, that he had an original different from that of the Gentiles, and that he descended from the patriarchs, who are celebrated in the Scriptures.

"The general contempt into which they have fallen should, one would think, have induced them to confound themselves with those people under whose dominion they lived, and to suppress every thing that tended to distinguish them. By separating themselves from those who were in power, they only drew upon themselves their hatred and derision. In many places they exposed themselves to death, by bearing the exterior mark of circumcision. Every human interest led them to efface the ignominious stain of their original.

"They saw every day their Messiah still farther removed from them; that the promises of their doctors about his speedy manifestation were false; that the predictions of the prophets, whom they could now no longer understand, were covered with obscurity; that all the supputations of time either terminated in Jesus Christ, or were without a period; that

* Principles de la Foy Chrètienne, tom. i. ch. 16.
† See the preceding chapter.

some among them lost all hope, and fell into incredulity, with regard to the Scriptures.

" And yet, notwithstanding all this, they still subsist, they multiply, they remain visibly separated from all other people; and in spite of the general aversion, in spite of the efforts of all those nations who hate them, and who have them in their power, in spite of every obstacle, they are preserved by a supernatural protection, which hath not in like manner preserved any other nation of the earth.

" One must surely have very little sense of what ought to give one astonishment and admiration, if this prodigy does not strike one; and one must have a strange idea of the providence of God, to think he had no hand in all this.

" But the Holy Spirit was not willing to leave us under any uncertainty upon this head; and hath declared to us by his prophets, that the preservation of the Jews is his work. ' Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished,' (Jerem. xlvi. 28.)

" This promise was made to the old patriarchs, to whom God hath reserved children, heirs of their faith, and to the remnant of Israel, who in the end of the ages shall believe in Jesus Christ.

" It is not for their sakes that the unworthy posterity of the unbelieving is suffered; and it is to maintain the communication between the first fathers and their latest successors, that the nation is preserved notwithstanding their iniquity, and in the midst of punishments that threatened to overwhelm them.

" But let it be observed, that this promise was made to the nation of the Jews only; and all others shall be either exterminated, or so confounded with each other, as to be no longer distinguished; and that it is the efficacy of the word of God which preserves the Jews amidst every thing that in all appearance would otherwise have sunk them entirely, and swallowed them up.

" ' Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them,' (Jerem. xxxiii. 25, 26.) This, I say, is the promise, and the end of the promise. The Jews shall one day be recalled through mercy; and for the sake of those who shall one day be recalled, the patience of God suffers all the rest, and his power preserves them.

" ' Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord,' (Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, 37.)

" That is to say, heaven and earth shall pass away sooner than the Jews shall cease to be a distinct people. The same power which hath given laws to nature, watches over their preservation. And the unheard-of crime which they have committed, in crucifying the Saviour promised to their fathers, and which hath filled up the measure of their former iniquity, will not move God to retract his promise, and reject entirely, and without resource, the posterity of Jocob.

" With what light were the prophets illuminated to presume to speak in so great and lofty a strain of a thing so little probable as the duration of a people weak, dispersed, universally hated, and guilty of the greatest of all crimes?

" Who would question the other prophecies, after seeing the accomplishment of this! What more astonishing proof can any one desire of the truth of the Christian religion, than these two events joined together, the dispersion of the Jews into all nations, and their preservation for sixteen hundred years? One of these things taken separately and by itself was incredible; and they became still more so by being united; but both these prodigies were necessary to prove that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

" It was necessary that those who had rejected him, should be banished into all regions, should into all parts carry with them the Scriptures, and should every where be covered with ignominy.

" But that the promises made their fathers might be accomplished, it was necessary that their banished family should be recalled, and that, their blindness being dissipated, they should adore him, whom Abraham had desired to see, (John, viii. 56,) and whom he had adored with a holy transport of joy and gratitude.

" The Jews, punished and dispersed, bear witness to Jesus Christ. The Jews, recalled and converted, will render him a testimony still more awful and striking. The Jews, preserved by a continual miracle, that they may preserve to Jesus Christ the stock and succession of those who shall one day believe in him, bear witness to him continually.

" Had they been only punished, they would have proved his justice only. Had they only been preserved, they could have proved no-

thing but his power. Had they not been reserved to worship him one day, they could not have proved his mercy and fidelity, nor have made him any reparation for their outrageous crimes.

"Their dispersion proves that he is come, but they have rejected him: their preservation demonstrates that he hath not rejected them for ever, and that they shall one day believe in him; and they declare by both that he is the Messiah, and the promised Saviour; that their miseries proceed from their not having known him, and that the only hope they have left is, that they shall one day come to the knowledge of him.

"We ought not to demand, why God supports them so long without enlightening them; and why he leaves so great an interval between the faithful fathers and the children that will hereafter become so too. To pretend to examine the impenetrable judgments of God, and the abysses of his wisdom, is to pretend 'to measure the height of heaven, and to search out the foundations of the earth,' God hath set bounds to the incredulity of the Jews, and to the ingratitude of the Gentiles, (Rom. xi. 32, 33:) his mercy and his justice succeed each other; and no one knows at what time he will execute what he hath promised to the latest posterity of Israel, although his promises are infallible.

"'Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.—Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: even every one that is called by my name. For I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.' (Isa. xliii. 1—8.)

"This prophecy, truly admirable in all its parts, is addressed to Jacob, the head of the tribes of Israel, and the heir of the promises of the Messiah and salvation.

"His posterity is dispersed into all the quarters of the world. This is the state of the Jews since the coming of Jesus Christ.

"Their dispersion is the punishment of their spiritual deafness and blindness. And with how great a blindness, with how great a deafness may one not deservedly reproach the Jews, for not having known Jesus Christ, and not having heard him, though he proved his divine mission by an infinity of miracles!

"Their condition seems desperate: the waters are ready to overwhelm them; the flames surround them on all sides: but the protection of God follows them throughout, and delivers them.

"This protection is vouchsafed to the whole body of the nation, in favour of those who shall one day call upon that name, which the rest have dishonoured with their blasphemies.

"God, out of mere mercy, will give a docile and faithful heart to those who shall renounce their former incredulity. They will be the creatures of his grace, to which alone they will stand indebted for their repentance and return.

"They will not then begin to see a new object, but an object which their blindness had concealed from them. They will not then hear a teacher, who began but a few days before to make his appearance, but one whom their voluntary and obstinate deafness had kept them from hearing before.

"The change will be in their persons, and not in his religion; that will remain what it is, but they will then begin to see it. Jesus Christ will take away the veil that is upon their eyes; but he will be the same. He will cure their deafness; but he will speak the same things.

"It is evident, then, that the Jews are preserved for him; and that the whole body of the nation subsists only by the efficacy of that promise, which is to lead the remains of Israel to Jesus Christ: "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears."

Can any one, after reading these several prophecies above quoted, question the veracity of the sacred writers; who, by publishing them in this manner, put their master's credit and their own upon contingencies very remote, and seemingly improbable? And doth not the exact accomplishment of these, and several other predictions, which might have been produced, sufficiently establish the authority of the Scriptures, and ascertain the truth of all the facts related in them?

Sect. XXX.—I come now to consider the second argument to induce us to believe that Christ rose from the dead, namely, the existence of the Christian religion.

From the existence of the Christian religion, may be drawn the same kind of evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the wonders attending it, as is exhibited to us of the Deluge by the many petrifactions of shells, and bones of fishes, and other animals of distant regions, &c. found often in the bottoms of the deepest mines, and the bowels of the highest mountains; for, as it is impossible to account for those various petrifactions being lodged in so many parts of the earth, some many leagues distant from the sea, others

very much above the level of it, without admitting such a subversion and confusion of this globe, as could not have been occasioned by a less violent cause than the "breaking up the fountains of the great deep," and the "waters flowing above the tops of the highest hills;" so will it, I apprehend, be extremely difficult to account for the propagation and present existence of Christianity in so many regions of the world, without supposing that Christ rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and enabled his disciples, by the miraculous gifts of his Holy Spirit, to surmount such obstacles as no mere human abilities could possibly overcome. In the former case, a cause superior to the ordinary operations of nature must be assigned for the production of effects plainly above, and contrary to, those operations: and for a solution of the latter, recourse in like manner must be had to an agent of power and wisdom transcending and controlling the natural faculties and wisdom of man; and this cause, this agent, can be no other than the great Lawgiver of nature, the All-wise and Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. He alone could "break up the fountains of the great deep, open the windows of heaven, and cover the whole earth with water;" that is, bring on that universal deluge which alone furnishes us with a solution of many phenomena, otherwise unaccountable: and he alone could break the jaws of death, and the prison of the grave, open the kingdom of heaven, and shower down upon mortals such mighty gifts and powers, as are the only adequate causes that can be assigned of the astonishing and preternatural birth and increase of Christianity. This will not appear exaggerated, if we consider the difficulties the gospel had to struggle with at its first appearance, and the inabilities, the human inabilities I mean, of its first preachers, to oppose and overcome those obstacles.

The difficulties they had to encounter were no less than the superstition, the prejudices, and the vices of the whole world; difficulties of so much the harder conquest, as being derived, though by corruption, from good principles; namely, the religion, the nature, and the reason of mankind. How powerful an opposition all these formed against the gospel, will best appear from a short view of the state of the world under the first ages of Christianity.

The Jews, though possessed of a body of laws, framed, as they acknowledged, by God himself, had, however, by listening to the comments and traditions of their scholastic and casuistical scribes and rabbins, so far departed from the spirit and intention of their Lawgiver, as to place almost the whole of their religion in the observance of ritual purities and ceremonies, to the neglect of the "greater and weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," which, as our Saviour told them, they ought to have regarded, and not to have disregarded the others, (Matt. xxiii. 23:) that is, the Jews were fallen from true religion into a superstition, which differed from that of the Gentiles principally in that the Gentiles worshipped a number of deities, the Jews acknowledged and worshipped one alone; but still they worshipped him superstitiously, with exterior services only, ablutions, sacrifices, observation of days, and other ceremonial duties; not perceiving, or not remembering, the great and wise end of those ceremonial institutions; which, by not allowing any forms of worship but those prescribed by the law, and not admitting to that worship any but those who, by circumcision, would become perfect Israelites, not only tended to keep them from being mingled with the Gentiles, and learning from them their idolatrous polytheism, by which means that fundamental article of all true religion, the belief of one God, though lost in all other nations, was for many centuries preserved among the Jews; but by the fasts and festivals, the purifications, offerings, and propitiatory sacrifices appointed in the ritual, put them perpetually in mind of the duties of prayer and thanksgiving to God; of the importance of moral purity, the obligation of repentance, and the necessity of an expiation for sin. But as holiness of life was of more difficult practice than the observation of ceremonies, numerous and burdensome as they seem to have been, they soon became willing to commute; and reposing their chief hopes of obtaining the favour and protection of God in their compliance with the ceremonial law, they turned their attention principally to that; and attached themselves to it so strongly, that though they did not scruple to commit a thousand immoralities, they would sooner die than eat any unclean meats, or suffer their temple to be profaned.

From this attachment to what they esteemed the law of Moses, they presumed upon the special favour and protection of God, and looked upon themselves as sole heirs of the promises made to Abraham and David, and repeated and confirmed by all their prophets. But the same blindness that withheld them from seeing the spiritual intent and meaning of the ceremonial institutions, kept them likewise from understanding the spiritual sense of those prophecies. The blessing, therefore, promised through the seed of Abraham to "all the nations of the earth," and the kingdom stipulated to the "posterity of David," they preposterously interpreted to belong to themselves alone; and expounding the deliverance of Israel intimated by the prophets, and the victories and dominion of the son of David, in a carnal sense, they expected, at the time of Christ's coming, a

Messiah, who should not only deliver them from their subjection to the Romans, but even conquer and subdue them, and all the other powers of the earth to the empire of the Jews, the sole favourites of Heaven, and destined lords of the universe, under their invincible glorious King. These expectations, so flattering to the whole nation, had so infected the minds of all orders and degrees, that even the disciples of Jesus, who were (some of them at least) of the lowest of the people, were a long while tainted with them, notwithstanding the spiritual instructions and plain declarations of their master to the contrary. And though, soon after his ascension, they seem to have given up all thoughts of a temporal kingdom, yet could they not for some time, nor without an express miracle, be convinced that the Gentiles had any title to the mercies of God, or any share in the kingdom of the Messiah. Such was the superstition, and such the prejudices of the whole Jewish nation.

To these national prejudices may be added others, arising from the peculiar tenets of the different sects that divided among them almost the whole people of the Jews. The most powerful of these were the Pharisees and Sadducees: of whose chief doctrines some notice is taken by the evangelists, as well as of their rancorous opposition to the gospel of Christ. The reader, who is desirous of seeing a more particular account of the opinions of these, and the other sects, may consult the Universal History.* It may be sufficient to observe here, that they had all of them many followers, had great authority with the people, and had, especially the Pharisees, a large share in the government of the Jewish state. And though there was a constant hatred and rivalry between them, and consequently so great a zeal in each for the advancement of their particular opinions, that they "would compass heaven and earth to gain one proselyte," yet they all agreed with the same ardour to oppose the progress of Christianity.

The idolatrous superstitions of the heathen world, and the zealous attachment of every nation and city to the worship of their respective tutelary deities, are too well known to be enlarged upon in this place: but I must observe, that besides the prejudices of the ignorant and bigoted multitude, there sprung up from these superstitions other obstacles to Christianity no less formidable, though of a different kind: for many religious rites and ceremonies having, either by prescription, or the policy of legislators, been mixed and interwoven with the administration of civil affairs, the worship of the gods was become not only an essential part of the constitution, but the great engine of government in most states and kingdoms. Thus, among the Greeks and other nations, omens and oracles, among the Romans, auspices, auguries, and sacrifices, either of thanksgiving, or propitiation, were often very successfully employed upon great and important occasions: on which account, all the Roman emperors, who had appropriated to themselves the authority of the whole empire, formerly divided among several officers, after the examples of Julius Cæsar and Augustus, either actually took upon them the office, or at least the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, chief priest; that is, according to the definition of Festus, *judex atque arbiter rerum humanarum divinarumque*, the judge and arbitrator of human and divine affairs. And hence those wise, as well as humane emperors, Trajan, and the two Antonines, might possibly think themselves under a double obligation, as chief magistrates and chief priests, of persecuting the Christians, whom they apparently considered as innovators with regard to the constitution, as well as religion of the empire. This, though no sufficient excuse for such barbarous and inhuman proceedings, may serve, however, to lessen the astonishment we are apt to fall into, upon hearing that so virtuous a religion as that of the Christians, was persecuted by so virtuous a prince as Antoninus the philosopher; though it must at the same time be acknowledged, that there was in him a great mixture of superstition, however incompatible that is thought to be with philosophy. This may also serve to shew us the distressful situation of Christianity, against whose progress not only the superstitious zeal of the multitude, the laws and policy of almost every state and kingdom, but the seeming duty of even good and just magistrates were fatally combined.

If to politic and pious princes, religion and the laws of the state might serve for a reason or pretence for opposing Christianity, to wicked emperors there was yet another motive distinct from any consideration either of duty or policy, or even of their vices; and that was, their own divinity. After all the power and dignity of the Roman people, and their several magistrates, was devolved upon the single person of the emperor, the senators, by a transition natural enough to slaves, from counsellors becoming flatterers, had not only established by law the absolute authority of their tyrants, but so far consecrated their persons, even in their lifetime, as to erect altars to their names, to place their statues among those of the gods, and to offer to them sacrifices and incense. Though these impious honours were conferred upon all alike, without any distinction of good or bad, yet the latter, not being able from their own merit to acquire to themselves any respect or veneration, had nothing to stand upon but the power and prerogatives of their office; of

* Vol. iv. p. 169. *et seq.*

which therefore they became so jealous, as to make it dangerous for any one to neglect paying them those outward honours, however extravagant and profane, which either the laws, or their own mad pride required. And hence, adoring the image of the emperors, swearing by their names, &c. became a mark and test of fidelity, with which all who sought their favour, or feared their power, most religiously complied; all those especially who held any magistracy under them, or governed the provinces. And these, by their offices, were yet farther obliged to take care, that within the limits of their jurisdiction, that most essential part of the duty of subjects to bad princes, exterior respect and veneration, was most punctually paid. Now, as the doctrines of Christ were entirely opposite to all kinds of idolatry, Christians were by this test, with which they could by no means comply, rendered liable to the guilt of that kind of treason, which tyrants and their ministers never pardon, how apt soever they may be to overlook crimes against religion or the state. And that this test was, among others, made use of against the professors of Christianity, even in the best reigns, is evident from a passage in the famous epistle of Pliny to Trajan, in which he relates his manner of proceeding with those who offered to clear themselves of the charge or suspicion of being Christians, in the following words: * "Propositus est libellus sine autore, multorum nomina continens, qui negant se esse Christianos, aut fuisse: cum præeunte me Deos appellarent, et imagini tuæ (quam propter hoc jusseram cum simulacris numinum afferri) thure ac vino supplicarent; præterea maledicerent Christo; quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt revera Christiani. Ergo dimittendos putavi. Alii ab indice nominati, esse se Christianos dixerunt, et mox negaverunt; fuisse quidem, sed desiisse; quidam ante triennium, quidam ante plures annos: non nemo etiam ante viginti quoque. Omes et imaginem tuam, deorumque simulacra venerati sunt; ii et Christo maledixerunt." — "A paper was set forth, without a name, containing a list of many people, who denied that they either were, or ever had been Christians. Now these persons having, after my example, invocated the gods, and with wine and incense paid their devotions to your image (which I had caused to be brought forth for that purpose, with the images of the gods) and having moreover blasphemed Christ, (any one of which things, it is said, no real Christian can be compelled to do,) I thought proper to dismiss them. Others, who had been informed against, confessed that they were once Christians, but denied their being so now, saying they had quitted that religion, some three years, others more, and some few even twenty years ago. All these worshipped both your image, and those of the gods, and did also blaspheme Christ."

To these powerful patrons of superstition, and enemies of the gospel, may be added others, whose authority, though inferior and subservient to the former, at least within the limits of the Roman empire, was, however, of very great and extensive influence,—I mean the priests, diviners, augurs, and managers of oracles, with all the subordinate attendants upon the temples and worship of almost an infinite number of deities; and many trades, if not entirely depending upon that worship, yet very much encouraged and enriched by it, such as statuaries, shrine-makers, breeders of victims, dealers in frankincense, &c. All of whom were by interest, to say nothing of religion, strongly devoted to idolatry.

It may not be improper also, under the article of religion, to mention the Circensian, and other spectacles exhibited among the Romans, the four great games of Greece, the Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian and Nemean, with many others of the same kind, celebrated with great magnificence in every country, and almost in every city of Greece, both in Europe and Asia; all of which were so many religious festivals, which, by the allurements of pomp and pleasure, not to mention the glory and advantages acquired by the conquerors in those games, attached many to the cause of superstition.

But superstition, universal and powerful as it was, by its union with the interests and pleasures of a considerable part of mankind, was not the only nor the greatest obstacle that Christianity had to contend with. Vice leagued against it a still greater number. The ambitious and luxurious, the debauched and lewd, the miser and extortioner, the unjust and oppressive, the proud and the revengeful, the fraudulent and rapacious, were all foes to a religion, that taught humility and moderation, temperance and purity even of thought, liberality and clemency, justice, benevolence, and meekness, the forgiving of injuries, and "the doing that only to others, which we would have them to do to us." Virtues agreeable indeed to reason, and discoverable in part by the clear light of nature; but the difficulty lay in bringing those to hear reason, who had abandoned themselves to superstition. And how was the almost extinguished ray of nature to be perceived, among the many false and glaring lights of religion, opinion, and philosophy, which recommended and sanctified many enormous vices? The gods, like dissolute and despotic princes, who have often been very properly compared to them, were themselves the great patrons and examples of tyranny, lewdness, and revenge, and almost all kinds of vice.

* Epist. xcvii. l. 10.

Opinion had magnified Alexander, and deified Julius Cæsar, for an ambition which ought to have rendered them the objects of the detestation and curses of all mankind.

Neither was philosophy so great a friend to virtue, or enemy to vice, as she pretended to be. Some philosophers, on the contrary, denied the being, at least the providence, of God, and future rewards and punishments, and as a just consequence of that opinion, placed the felicity of mankind in the enjoyments of this world, that is, in sensual pleasures. Others, affecting to doubt and question every thing, took away the distinction of virtue and vice, and left their disciples to follow either, as their inclination directed. These were, at least indirectly, preachers of vice. And among those who undertook to lead their disciples to the temple of virtue, there were so many different, and even inconsistent opinions, some of them so paradoxical and absurd, others so subtilized and mysterious, and all of them so erroneous in their first principles, and so defective in many great points of religion and morality, that it is no wonder that Philosophy, however venerable in her original, and noble in her pretensions, degenerated into speculation, sophistry, and a science of disputation, and, from a guide of life, became a pedantic president of the schools, from whence arose another kind of adversaries to the gospel,—a set of men who, from seeing farther than the vulgar, came to fancy they could see every thing, and to think every thing subject to the discussion of reason; and carrying their inquiries into the nature of God, the production of the universe, and the essence of the human soul, either framed upon each of these, or adopted, some quaint or mysterious system, by which they pretended to account for all the operations of nature, and measure all the actions of God and man. And as every sect had a system peculiar to itself, so did each endeavour to advance their own upon the ruins of all the rest; and this engaged them in a perpetual war with one another; in which, for want of real strength and solid arguments, they were reduced to defend themselves and attack their adversaries with all those arts, which are commonly made use of to cover or supply the deficiency of sense and reason,—sophistry, declamation, and ridicule, obstinacy, pride, and rancour. Men of this turn, accustomed to reason upon topics, in which reason is bewildered—so proud of the sufficiency of reason, as to think they could account for every thing—so fond of their own systems, as to dread conviction more than error, and so habituated to dispute pertinaciously, to assert boldly, and to decide magisterially upon every question, that they were almost incapable of any instruction, could not but be averse to the receiving for their master a crucified Jew, and for teachers a parcel of low obscure persons of the same nation, who professed to "glory in the cross of Christ, to know nothing but him crucified," and to neglect and despise the so much admired wisdom of this world; and who, moreover, taught points never thought of by the philosophers, such as the redemption of mankind, and the resurrection of the dead, and who, though far from forbidding the due exercise of reason, yet confined it within its proper bounds, and exhorted their disciples to submit with all humility, and to rely with all confidence upon the wisdom of God, instead of pretending to arraign His proceedings, whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out.

From this view of the Jewish and Gentile world, it is evident that every thing that most strongly influences and tyrannizes over the mind of man,—religion, custom, law, policy, pride, interest, vice, and even philosophy, was united against the Gospel; enemies in their own nature very formidable and difficult to be subdued, had they even suffered themselves to be attacked upon equal ground, and come to a fair engagement. But not relying upon their own strength only, (for prejudice and falsehood are always diffident and fearful,) they intrenched themselves behind that power which they were in possession of, and rendered themselves inaccessible, as they imagined, to Christianity, by planting round them not only all kinds of civil discouragements, but even torments, chains, and death; terrors which no one could despise, who had any views of ambition or interest, and who was not even contented to resign, what he might otherwise have enjoyed in peace, and without a crime,—his reputation, his ease, his fortune, and his life. These were the difficulties which Christianity had to struggle with for many ages, and over which she at length so far prevailed as to change the whole face of things, overturn the temples and altars of the gods, silence the oracles, humble the impious pride of emperors, those earthly and more powerful deities, confound the presumptuous wisdom of philosophers, and introduce into the greatest part of the known world a new principle of religion and virtue,—an event apparently too unwieldy and stupendous to have been brought about by mere human means, though all the accomplishments of learning, all the insinuating and persuasive powers of eloquence, joined to the profoundest knowledge of the nature and duty of man, and a long practice and experience in the ways of the world, had all met in the apostles. But the apostles, excepting Paul, were ignorant and illiterate, bred up for the most part in mean occupations, natives and inhabitants of a remote province of Judea, and sprung from a nation hated and despised by the rest of mankind. So that, allowing it possible that

a change so total and universal might have been effected by the natural powers and faculties of man, yet had the apostles none of those powers, Saint Paul alone excepted, who was indeed eloquent and well versed in all the learning of the Jews, that is, in the traditions and doctrines of the pharisees, of which sect he was,—a learning which, instead of assisting him in making converts to the gospel, gave him the strongest prejudices against it, and rendered him a furious persecutor of the Christians. Yet of this eloquence, and of this learning, he made no use in preaching the gospel; on the contrary, "when I came to you," (says he to the Corinthians,) "I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified: And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom," 1 Cor. ii. 1—4. And in the preceding chapter, comparing the insufficiency of the preachers of the gospel with the success of their preaching, he attributes the latter to the true cause, the wisdom and power of God, in these expressive words: "For Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, (Isaiah, xxix. 14,) I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world! For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men: For ye see your calling, brethren, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence," 1 Cor. i. 17—29.

This is a true representation of the condition of the first preachers of the gospel, and their opposers. The latter were possessed of all the wisdom, authority, and power of the world; the former were ignorant, contemptible, and weak. Which of them, then, according to the natural course of human affairs, ought to have prevailed? The latter, without all doubt. And yet not the apostle only, but all history and our own experience assure us, that the ignorant, the contemptible, and the weak, gained the victory from the wise, the mighty, and the noble. To what other cause, then, can we attribute a success so contrary to all the laws by which the events of this world are governed, than to the interposition of God, manifested in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the miraculous powers conferred upon his apostles and disciples? A cause adequate to all the effects, however great and astonishing. For, with these ample credentials from the King of heaven, even a poor fisherman of Galilee might appear with dignity before the high priest and Sanhedrim of the Jews, assert boldly that "God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ;" and make good his assertion by proving, that he was risen from the dead, strange and supernatural as it might seem, not only by his own testimony, and that of his brethren the apostles and disciples of Jesus, by whom he was seen "for forty days after his passion," but by innumerable instances of a power, superior in like manner to nature, derived upon them from him, and exercised by them in his name. From the Scriptures also might the same ignorant and illiterate Galileans shew, against the traditions of the elders, the learning of the scribes, and the prejudices of the whole Jewish nation, that the humble suffering Jesus was the mighty triumphant Messiah spoken of by the prophets; since if, with reference to the interpretation of those prophecies, any doubt could have arisen among the people to whose expositions they should submit, to those of the scribes and elders, or those of the apostles, the latter had to produce, in support of their authority, the attestation of that Holy Spirit, by whom those prophets were inspired, now speaking through their mouths in all the languages of the earth. And with regard to that other point, of still harder digestion to the Jews, namely, the calling the uncircumcised Gentiles to an equal participation of the kingdom of God, and consequently the abolishing circumcision, and the whole ceremonial law, the apostles were furnished with an argument, to which all the rabbins were not able to reply; by the Holy Ghost bestowing upon the Gentile converts to Christianity the same heavenly gifts as he had conferred at the beginning upon the believing Jews.

Invested with such full powers from on

high, might these same obscure Jews, notwithstanding the contempt and hatred which all other nations had for that people, undertake and accomplish the arduous and amazing task of preaching the gospel to all the world. The belief of one God is the fundamental article of all true religion; and the unity of the Godhead is certainly discoverable, and even to be demonstrated by reason. But this article of belief (as I have said before) was not to be found in the religion of any nation besides the Jews; and long arguments and deductions of reason, by which it was to be demonstrated, were above the capacity of the greatest part of mankind. To prove this important truth, therefore, in a manner easy to be comprehended by the weakest, and yet not to be refuted by the strongest understanding, the apostles and their followers were for many ages endowed, besides all their other miraculous gifts, with a power over devils or demons, (the only deities of the pagans that had any real being,) permitted perhaps to shew themselves at that time in extraordinary operations, for the sake of illustrating and proving this great truth. By this power they cast them out of many who were possessed by them, drove them from their temples, groves, and oracles, obliged them to confess their own inferiority, to acknowledge the dominion of Jesus Christ, and to declare his apostles to be "the servants of the most high God," sent to "shew mankind the way of salvation."* This power they exercised in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to prove his mediation and intercession between God and man, the second article of the Christian creed. And as by this power, thus exercised in the name of Christ, the apostles and their followers were enabled to prove, even to the senses of all mankind, that there is but one God, and one Mediator; so, from that and other miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, healing all manner of diseases, speaking with various tongues, prophesying, &c. did they derive to themselves authority to teach the great doctrines of Christianity,—repentance, remission of sins, holiness of life, future rewards and punishments, and the resurrection of the dead,—of which last, the resurrection of Christ was both an instance and a pledge; as the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon believers was a clear evidence of the efficacy of repentance, and the remission of their sins. And of the necessity of a holy life, and the certainty of future rewards and punishments, nothing could afford a stronger and more convincing argument, than the lives and deaths of these ambassadors of God, who were apparently guided into all truth by his inspiration; and who, upon the assurance of a blessed immortality, not only practised all the virtues they preached, but cheerfully underwent all kinds of sufferings, and even death itself.

After this manner were the first preachers of the Gospel, weak, ignorant, and contemptible as they were, furnished with strength sufficient to overthrow the "strongholds of Satan," the superstitions, prejudices, and vices of mankind; and by the "demonstration of the power of God," an argument whose conclusiveness was visible to the dullest capacity, enabled to confound the subtilties of the most disputatious, and surpass the wisdom of the wisest philosophers, in establishing religion upon the belief of one God, grounding the obligation to virtue upon its true principle, the command of God; and deriving the encouragement to holiness of life from the promises of God, to reward those who should obey his will with eternal happiness, obtained by the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ. Which last point, together with the doctrine of providence, the free agency of man, and assisting grace, how much soever beyond the ken of reason, yet could not but be admitted by all reasonable men for certain truths, as standing upon the authority of persons visibly commissioned and inspired by God. For what conclusion of reason, what maxim in philosophy is more evident, than that men speaking by the immediate inspiration of God, cannot lie? And is not the divine inspiration of the apostles to be inferred with as much certainty, from the mighty wonders they performed, as the divine creation of the world from the stupendous beauty, order, and magnificence of the universe? Every effect must have a cause; and a supernatural effect must have a cause superior to nature; and this cause can be no other than God. There may be, indeed, and we are authorized by the Scriptures to say there are, many beings both good and bad, endued with faculties and powers exceeding those of man; but these beings are, doubtless, limited as well as man in the exercise of those powers, and subject to laws prescribed to them by their great Creator, which, in respect to them, may be likewise styled the laws of nature. From whence it follows, that they cannot break in upon or disturb the laws of any other system of creatures, though inferior to them, without the permission of the Universal King, who, nevertheless, may certainly make use of them as instruments to bring about his wise purposes, even beyond the bounds of their proper spheres. Thus, in establishing Christianity, he thought fit to employ the ministration not of angels only, but of demons, though in such a manner as to leave no doubt of their subjection to his sovereignty. The angels were, upon many occasions, assisting to Christ and his apostles; the demons trembled, and fled at their command; and both of them, those

* Acts, xvi. 17. See, for many other instances, Whitby's General Preface to the Epistles.

by their subserviency, and these by the servility of their obedience, manifestly declared Christ and his apostles to be vested with an authority and power derived from their Lord and King. So that mankind, seeing the apostles possessed of a power plainly paramount to the powers of all other known beings, whether angels or demons, could no more question their being commissioned and inspired by God, than doubt whether the magnificent frame of the universe, with all the various natures belonging to it, was the workmanship of his almighty hands.

Thus by arguing from effects, notorious and visible effects, to causes, the surest method of investigating and provingsome kinds of truths, I have endeavoured to demonstrate (if I may so speak without offence) the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, upon which the whole system of Christianity depends. For if Christ is not risen from the dead, then, as Saint Paul says, vain is the hope of Christians, and the preaching of the apostles vain ; nay, we may go still farther, and pronounce vain the preaching of Christ himself. For had he not risen, and proved himself by many infallible tokens to have risen from the dead, the apostles and disciples could have had no inducement to believe in him, that is, to acknowledge him for the Messiah, the Anointed of God : on the contrary, they must have taken him for an impostor, and under that persuasion could never have become preachers of the gospel, without becoming enthusiasts or impostors ; in either of which characters it is impossible they should have succeeded, to the degree which we are assured they did, considering their natural insufficiency, the strong opposition of all the world to the doctrines of Christianity, and their own high pretensions to miraculous powers, about which they could neither have been deceived themselves, nor have deceived others. Supposing, therefore, that Christ did not rise from the dead, it is certain, according to all human probability, there could never have been any such thing at all as Christianity, or it must have been stifled soon after its birth. But we know, on the contrary, that Christianity hath already existed above seventeen hundred years. This is a fact about which there is no dispute, but Christians and infidels disagree in accounting for this fact. Christians affirm their religion to be of divine original, and to have grown up and prevailed under the miraculous assistance and protection of God ; and this they not only affirm and offer to prove by the same kind of evidence by which all remote facts are proved, but think it may very fairly be inferred from the wonderful circumstances of its growth and increase, and its present existence. Infidels, on the other hand, assert Christianity to be an imposture, invented and carried on by men. In the maintenance of which assertion their great argument against the credibility of the resurrection, and the other miraculous proofs of the divine original of the gospel, founded in their being miraculous—that is, out of the ordinary course of nature—will be of no service to them, since they will still find a miracle in their way, namely, the amazing birth, growth, and increase of Christianity. Which facts, though they should not be able to account for them, they cannot however deny. In order, therefore, to destroy the evidence drawn from them by Christians, they must prove them not to have been miraculous, by shewing how they could have been effected in the natural course of human affairs, by such weak instruments as Christ and his apostles, (taking them to be what they are pleased to call them, enthusiasts or impostors,) and by such means as they were possessed of and employed. But this I imagine to be as much above the capacity of the greatest philosophers to shew, as it is to prove the possibility of executing the proud boast of Archimedes (even granting his postulatum) of moving and wielding the globe of this earth, by machines of human invention, and composed of such materials only as nature furnishes for the ordinary use of man.

THE END.

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